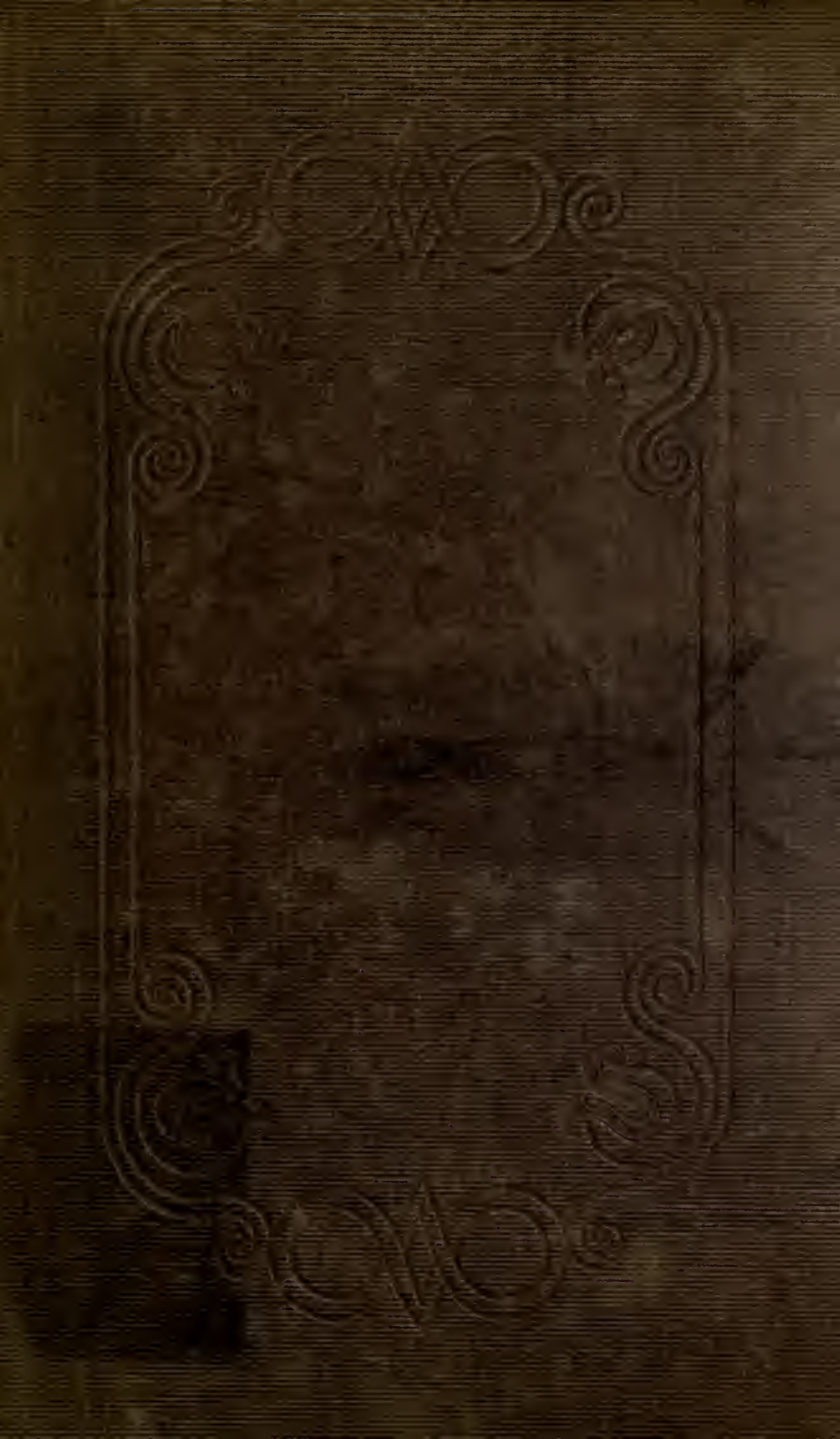

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A WINTER'S JOURNEY

(TÂTAR,)

FROM

CONSTANTINOPLE TO TEHRAN;

WITH

TRAVELS THROUGH VARIOUS PARTS OF PERSIA,

&c.

BY JAMES BAILLIE FRASER, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"A TOUR IN THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS," "THE KUZZILBASH,"

ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1838.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LORD GLENELG,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

WHOSE ENLIGHTENED POLICY SUGGESTED THE OBJECTS,

AND MAINLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE PERFORMANCE,

OF THE FOLLOWING JOURNEY,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE, WITH MUCH ESTEEM AND RESPECT,

INSCRIBED

BY HIS SINCERE AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

London, 1st July 1838.

2063541

PREFACE.

THE appearance of another book of travels in Persia by the same author who, more than twelve years ago, published a work on Khorasan, &c., may be thought to require some explanation. A few words will suffice for this purpose.

After a period when the author of these works believed that his travelling days were over, — that he had hung up his "Uvida vestimenta" for good in the hall of his own home, his services were unexpectedly required, and he was summoned once more to resume his well-worn cloak and riding gear for a winter journey of no ordinary severity, and another pilgrimage to those lands which he had traversed already with so much interest as a younger man.

No one possessed of ordinary feeling can revisit without emotion scenes of former adventure, imprinted on the memory in the bright hues of first impressions and early success, mingled with the darker tones of failure, disappointment, or distress,

all mellowed by the softening charm of distance, the golden haze of time, into a happy and fascinating picture. But how seldom to the traveller does the delight of those early recollections remain undiminished on a second view? That principle of change, inherent in all sublunary things, operates with peculiar suddenness and activity in the East. On reaching each well-remembered spot, he views it under a new and sadder light. It has often changed in reality — he himself has changed still more surely; a gloomier, a more pensive tone is thrown over all he sees, and he learns at length to school himself for suffering by anticipating disappointment. Seldom, indeed, can a comparison of the present with the past be made without pain.

Much, assuredly, of pain and sadness, as well as of fatigue and anxiety, attended the wanderings which these Volumes record; but still it was interesting to view the alterations which a dozen years had effected in a changeful country. The nature of the author's public duty also, afforded him no common opportunities of observation; and his route brought him into more than usual contact with the wild Toorkoman tribes of Northern Khorasan, enabling him to add considerably to the account of the habits and customs of that fierce and predatory people given in his former travels. He is thus led to hope that he may awaken in his readers a portion of that interest which he felt himself.

The present volumes contain an account of his Tatar journey to Tehran, and his progress through Khorasan, Mazunderân, &c., to Tabrez. A future part, if he is spared to prepare it, will describe his further travels, through parts of Koordistan and Mesopotamia till then chiefly unvisited and undescribed by Europeans. These districts are, as is well known, peculiarly interesting from their numerous remains of antiquity ; nor do they possess a less lively attraction in their living inhabitants, the Koordish and Arab tribes, with whom the Author's route brought him into intimate contact, and with whose character and manners he had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted.

Thus much he has thought it right to premise, not by way of allurement or apology,— for these are not the days in which the public can be wheedled into reading a dull book by specious prefaces or modest pretences, — but simply that the reader may have some notion of the subjects to which his attention is invited, the ground over which he has to travel, and the title the Author may have to his consideration. If the work shall tend, in however small a degree, to excite interest in, and direct the public eye towards regions and nations that are far too little known in this country, it will not have been without its reward.

London, July 1838.

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A WINTER'S JOURNEY

FROM

CONSTANTINOPLE TO TEHRAN.

LETTER I.

Leave London. — Road to Dover. — Reflections. — The Passage. — Calais. — Ricketty Carriage. — Air Pillows. — Liege. — Prussian Civility. — The Rhine. — Frankfort. — Wurtzburgh. — Gleam of Sunshine. — Ratisbon. — Aspect of Upper Bavaria — and of its Peasantry — and Roads — Contrasted with those of Prussia. — First peep of Austria. — Custom-house. — The Danube. — Möelk. — Reach Vienna.

Vienna, December 1833.

DEAR ——,

YOU see that I lose no time in complying with your injunctions, for this is the first halting-place from whence I could easily have addressed you.

You know how long and anxiously I had waited for the "laissez aller!" — how many times in vain I had to "plod my weary way" between the "Club" latitudes of Pall-Mall and the official regions of Downing Street. But at length "all was accom-

plished:" my final instructions were delivered me, (my private arrangements had long since been completed,) and at ten o'clock on the night of the 10th instant I quitted the cheerful club-room for the last time, and took my way to the Foreign-Office, where I had still to receive despatches.

It is a strange thing, that mixture of gladness and disturbance with which, at the moment of departure, we view the inanimate objects with which long acquaintance has made us familiar, yet which a long involuntary detention has occasioned us to regard with weariness, if not disgust. It is then that the comforts to which these very objects may have contributed rise up in judgment against us, and we feel a twinge of remorse, as if we had been guilty of ingratitude to a friend. I know that, as I cast my eyes for the last time around the neat little room with its snug French bed that had so often received my weary limbs — as I threaded the streets and alleys I had trodden so often, and as I saw the great folding-doors of the Club-house close behind me upon its gorgeous apartments and delightful library, my most seducing retreat for so many months, — something very like a sigh rose in my throat in spite of joy at the accomplishment of my wishes.

Truly our life is of a mingled yarn, when even the attainment of our most earnest desire is not unattended by a shade of gloom! The truth is, there is always something in the word "farewell!" which unstrings the nerves however powerfully excited; and I should have little respect for the man who could leave the dumb and lifeless things by

which he has been long surrounded, perhaps "for ever,"—that little heart-breaking sentence,—without a pang of the kind I have been describing. What then must be our feelings towards animated beings, — towards the objects of our friendship and our affection?

But it will not do to think of such things at such a time; we should never get on. Therefore, suppose all these matters duly got over, hands heartily shaken, warm adieus and kind wishes exchanged, and myself wrapped in my travelling cloak, striding away with firm step and resolved brow to Downing Street,—rain falling and wind blowing hard,—a long bustling hour or two of sealing and directing papers, and packing of white sheepskin bags, during which time I warm myself at the last good sea-coal fire I may see for some time, and chat over the impending journey with the gentlemen of the office.

At one in the morning all was ready. The sharp rattle of the post-chaise coming up to the door announced that the moment of action was come. I threw my bags into one corner of it, and myself into the other; — bang went the door; —"All right?" briskly demanded the postilion; — "All right,— go on," responded the porter in a tone of more importance; and in another minute we were tearing away over Westminster Bridge at the rate of twelve miles an hour, through a perfect tempest.

It was a strong contrast to the calm tenor of the few preceding months, — a violent transition from the quiescent state I had so long endured. I could not help wondering if all were real, as the carriage

rattled along that great thoroughfare of exit and entrance to England. "And what," says a deservedly popular author, speaking of another of these great vomitories, "what can be fuller of interest to the minds of our fellow-subjects than this important thoroughfare? It is one of the great paths of our nation, that leads the anxious merchant to his foreign store, the seaman to his fearful trade; on which the devoted lover journeys from his anxious mistress, the faithful husband from his constant wife. Along that road, how many a noble soldier has travelled to where there is no return! — how many British sailors have sped to death or victory! How little does it strike the ordinary admirers of well-appointed public carriages, who stand and praise the 'neat turn-out' and the 'well-bred cattle' of these coaches, what varied interest often hangs upon their wheels!—nor, as they roll along the level ground, does the casual observer often think what feelings, what hopes, what doubts, what fears, what anticipations, and what regrets, are pent within their panels."

Who that has travelled much, and reflected at all, does not feel the force and truth of these remarks? — and though the road to Dover may possibly yield to that of Portsmouth in point of variety, it will scarcely be thought to do so in intensity of interest. Along it do the youth of our English aristocracy, at length escaped from more rigid tuition, hurry to scour the Continent in their travelling chariots, or to spend their time, and money, and health, in the gay debaucheries of foreign capitals. Along it, too,

proceeds with painful slowness the wasted invalid, who, worn out with sickness and suffering at home, sacrifices feelings and comfort to — die far from friends and family in a distant land. Along it dash at speed those couriers who are charged with the counsels of the wise and the great—on whose farthels are borne the destinies of Europe and the world! —But if we stay to describe all who travel on this well-known road, we shall never get on ourselves; so suppose the well-paid postilions vying in rapidity of motion with each other, the hours and the carriage rolling on, and the latter entering the town of Dover and stopping at Wright's at eight o'clock, (just seven hours from London,) and in time to get a bit of breakfast and whip into the foreign mail-packet, having passed the coach itself on the road.

The packet-boat was crowded. It blew fresh, with a short, jobbling sea, so that every soul was sick; and had it not been for my own discomfort, I could have laughed heartily to see the cabin-boys preparing the piles of basins for the use of future invalids. But it was very tragical mirth to me as well as others; so I got possession of a tolerable spot to lie down on, and lifted my head no more.

A passage of two hours and a half, rough and stormy, and sick — sick, took us to Calais, where all the little boys speak such surprisingly good French. Two hours more served to settle all matters with the Custom-house, to change my money into five-franc pieces, and to purchase and dispose my baggage in a very neat, purpose-like britchka, furnished by the obliging M. Quillac, who guaranteed

its carrying me without accident to Vienna; and the second hour after noon saw me rolling along the level French road towards Brussels.

One word, however, of Calais in passing. I could not help being struck with the order that was observed in our crowded boat, and on the more crowded pier, as we came to, and prepared to disgorge our various passengers and other property, so unlike what occurs on a similar occasion in England. Two soldiers were instantly posted, to prevent all access to or from the vessel of any but those who had real business; and even the *commissaires* from the hotels did not press forward until they were called, when, bringing their own porters, they took up your baggage and at once proceeded to the Custom-house. Again, it is an advantage to strangers to have all petty charges paid by these *commissaires,* who, though they or their masters may fleece such birds of passage to a certain extent, prevent others from doing so in the manner so shamefully common when a foreigner lands in England.

The contrast between English and French posting has been a thousand times remarked; but it is so ludicrously strong, that no one to whom it is not familiar can fail to be struck with it. The fantastically-dressed postilions, with their laced jackets and huge jack-boots; their long whip, with its eternal crick-crack-crock; the poor jades of horses, harnessed with ropes, often even to the very bridle-reins, such as you would scarcely look for as the trappings of a wild Highland garron, and going scarce six miles an hour, — replace most woefully

the neat set-out, the capital horses, and the dashing speed of the English road. But, *n'importe!* on we go through the flat and uninteresting environs of Calais, with their ditches and pollard willows; but night comes on soon in the month of December, and darkness speedily covered the land.

I was not permitted to travel long in uninterrupted comfort. My carriage, though guaranteed by M. Quillac, was frail and somewhat stricken in years. Before morning it gave evidence of this in the breaking of the fastenings of both swingle-trees, which it cost me more than half-an-hour to repair at Cassel; and, on approaching Halle, a beggar, who was very importunate, and whom I was disposed rather rudely to dismiss as he ran alongside the carriage, earned charity and reward at once by giving notice that one of the fastenings of a hind-spring had given way. This also cost some time to repair, and, to my sorrow, prevented me from reaching Brussels before dark: so I passed through this gorgeous city of interesting recollections, a snow-storm adding to the gloom of the night, and, only stopping for a few minutes to take up some further despatches at the English ambassador's, entered upon a long and dreary paved road, cut up by the effect of weather, every stone of which made my ricketty vehicle groan and creak in a very alarming style.

It was not without reason that I mistrusted the strength of my carriage; for, some miles before entering St. Tronde, I had been sensible of a strange alteration in the nature of its movement, and, on changing horses at that town, we discovered that

one fore and one hind spring were broken. The hour alone would have prevented speedy repair; but, upon inquiry, I was told that St. Tronde could boast of no smith skilled in repairing springs, so there was no remedy but to push on for Liege, two stages further, where a good coachmaker might be found, at the risk of sticking entirely by the way,—a prospect which, in a night of storm and snow, was in nowise inviting. We, therefore, tied up the fractured parts as well as we could with ropes: and you may conceive my anxiety and uneasiness as the infirm machine bumped over the rough pavement for seven mortal hours, for so long was it ere the concern was deposited—in safety, thank God—within the court of the Aigle Noir at Liege.

And here let me pause to pay a just tribute to one of the greatest comforts in the way of inventions that has been of late bestowed upon travellers,—I mean the air-pillow of India-rubber-cloth made by Messrs. Mackintosh and Co. and others. I had purchased one for quite another purpose; but finding, after a few hours, that the stuffing of the back of the carriage had been worn so bare as to leave almost exposed a cross-bar, to the serious annoyance of my shoulders, I took out my pillow, and, slightly inflating it, interposed it between myself and the offending part. The effect was perfect, the relief instant; —the pillow accommodated itself at will to any position I pleased, and formed the most delightful support that art could have contrived. I have no doubt that, but for it, I should have been almost knocked up in the long-run: with it, I continued

not only fresh and unwearied, but comfortable. Let all travellers, therefore, who love their ease, provide themselves with such an air-pillow.

The repairs of the carriage occupied about fourteen hours, during which time a severe headach prevented me from seeing much of the town: but, indeed, the continued fall of snow would at all events have done that; and I regretted it, as both the town and its environs appeared worthy of attention. As it was, there was nothing struck me so much as the enormous quantities of cabbage in the markets, and the large hats of the women, or the handkerchiefs on their heads, chiefly red, or spotted with red. In the shops, all the young women were bareheaded, and many of them very pretty.

At eight o'clock we quitted Liege, and were jolted along an execrable road to Aix-la-Chapelle: a capital trial for the new springs, and my temper, or rather patience, for I was in momentary expectation that the whole fabric would go to wreck, and leave me helpless on the road,—which, as snow and sleet never ceased, would have been a most undesirable consummation.

On entering the Prussian territories, I was instantly struck with a very agreeable change of tone in all I came in contact with: the authorities, or at least their delegates at the gates, were perfectly civil, the postilions better and more obliging, and, after passing through a sandy tract near Aix, the road greatly improved. In the grey of the morning we reached Cologne, of which I saw little more than the summits of its lofty buildings; and I regret that I

can say scarcely more of the beautiful valley of the Rhine from thence to Coblentz, where I dined and discussed a flask of its pleasant wine. Something, indeed, of grand and imposing did occasionally burst into view during the intermissions of the storm, and the mountains and castellated rocks loomed more magnificent through the dull haze and clouds that enveloped them; and, as sometimes we approached the noble river, it was beautiful to see them all reflected in its swift stream, broken into uncertainty by the occasional gusts. It was sufficiently provoking to see just enough to whet the appetite, and no more: but who can tell? — mystery always excites interest, and, though I regretted to lose so much fine scenery, and saw the vine-covered hills and plains, and the multitudes of picturesque buildings and villages, flitting past me with regret, it is possible that, fully seen, the landscape might have been less pleasing. I am sure, however, that in spring and early summer it must be enchanting.

Darkness and continued rain hid everything of Coblentz from me as I entered it,—even the bridge by which I crossed the river to reach it was undistinguishable; but the lights flashed brilliantly along the banks, and cheerless enough I felt it, plunging once more into the darkness to push on towards Frankfort. We passed the fortified town of Mayence with its pretty gardens and orchards, in early morning, and reached the *Englishers Hoff* hotel at Frankfort about eleven o'clock. Bad as the weather was, I was charmed with the whole country around Mayence and Frankfort; indeed, all the way from

Cologne it was like a perfect garden, and even the open fields were studded with fruit-trees. The roads too were excellent, and in many places I observed a very respectable approximation towards macadamzation. I may here remark, that I found the posting better in Belgium than in France, and in Prussia superior to either; horses far better, postilions more civil, and less time lost in changing.

Frankfort is a handsome town, and on the Sunday-morning, when we entered it, presented a pleasant spectacle. All ranks were going to church, clad in their sabbath clothes. The lower orders, with their sober garb and staid gate, reminded me of the men of the Scottish Lowlands. The blue waggoner's frock and foraging-cap are much worn by the young, and I remarked that most of them had a military air — no doubt caught from the military people by whom the place is surrounded. Of the women several were very pretty, but too much disposed to *embonpoint*.

The *chaussées* of Belgium and the roads of Aix-la-Chapelle having shaken my poor carriage, Sunday though it was, it became necessary to have it repaired. This detained me till eight at night, when I left Frankfort in a perfect storm. The wind was high, and the rain beat in so fast, that I congratulated myself at having provided a good fur cloak, and bag for my feet; a precaution which some sharp suffering on the preceding night had induced me to take. The morning found us among hills rather of a bleak character, though varied in many places with oak and stunted fir, and cultivated in some

parts to the top with corn or vineyards. The hollows, too, were occupied by neat little villages, from the centre of each of which arose its spire. It was, no doubt, a populous country.

Towards eleven o'clock we came down upon Wurtzburgh, the first city of Bavaria; and a picturesque town it is, with its cupolas and minarets, and spires, that have a tinge of Saracenic architecture, lying as it does low in the valley of the Maine, surrounded by richly-clad hills, and crowned by its striking and noble castle. The old bridge, by which we reached the city, adorned with numerous statues of saints and bishops, in stone, particularly attracted my attention; and so many buildings did there seem worthy of examination, that I deeply regretted the necessity which forced me to forego all objects but that of getting forward.

The Bavarian government is more jealous and strict on the subject of passports than those of France, Belgium, or Prussia; and the examination of mine, courier as I was, cost a delay of an hour and a half. The view of the town, as we looked back upon it from a height, was particularly fine; but the country around it is not very inviting, and the roads were so bad, that, as night closed in, it became a matter of painful anxiety to know how the carriage would stand the heavy jolts. To add to my uneasiness, just about dusk, and at the beginning of a very long stage, we got a drunken postilion, who seemed resolved to overset the carriage, or, at least, to try how near he could go to each side-ditch without doing so. Darkness and uncertainty are the

parents of anxiety and alarm ; and when to these is added utter ignorance of the language and a want of confidence in your own people, perplexity is increased tenfold. Suppose, for instance, that the carriage had been overturned or broken in some part of the road far from any of the thinly-scattered villages, what reliance could I have placed in the exertions of the drunken boor who drove it for procuring assistance? while I myself, tied to the spot by the necessity of guarding my charge, and, in fact, unable from ignorance of the localities around me to take any step for extricating the vehicle, must have stood there until relieved by casual passers-by next morning. It was by no means a pleasant situation, I assure you ; and all thought of sleep, or even rest, was out of the question.

We got through, however, by the goodness of Providence, and a dull morning broke upon a high bleak country, partially covered with dark and stunted forests of fir, much of which seemed in a state of decay. We breakfasted at Nieumarkt, a mean-looking place, affording, however, a comfortable auberge : and a little after quitting it, for the first time since leaving London, the sky began to clear and the sun to shine out bright. The black clouds that had hung over us so low that they seemed resting on the earth broke and let in the light, and all the scene was changed.

One must have travelled as I had done for several days and nights during a continued succession of stormy weather, wet, cold, and comfortless, with the fear of an overturn or break-down

continually before my eyes, to appreciate the effect of such a change not only on external objects, but on the mind that regards them. What a host of black doubts and dreary forebodings were flitting over it last night, colouring not only the present, but the future, with their own sable hue! Where were they now? — fled with the morning mists, leaving it bright and clear as the face of that same heaven which so lately loured, to reflect visions of happiness and success. May not a thinking mind draw a good moral lesson from such incidents?—do they not impressively illustrate the changing and transitory character of all earthly pursuits, and point to a more implicit reliance on that Being with whom alone can perfect rest and tranquillity be found?—Such, at least, was the train of thought it awakened in me; and though the gleam of sunshine soon vanished and the sky was again overcast, I trust that the lesson it seemed to teach and the salutary feelings it had awakened were of longer duration.

In the afternoon of this day we first crossed the Danube, here but a small stream. A few miles below, at the old and interesting town of Ratisbon, it becomes broader and shallower, and we crossed it again by an old stone bridge. The whole country through which we had been travelling from the preceding morning,—that is, from about half-way between Frankfort and Wurtzburgh to Ratisbon,—is a succession of long undulating swells, divided by deep valleys with water-courses, never rising into mountains, seldom into hills of any great height, but certainly of great general elevation, for the snow and ice

were more abundant than below, and then but slowly melting. Rock seldom appears on the surface, but moulders in beds below it, affording, we are led to suppose, favourable soil for the vine, as there are vineyards planted in some places almost to the greatest height. In fact, though the country has a bleak aspect, there is no part of it waste, and I apprehend that it is populous. Where the surface is not wooded, it is employed as pasture or in tillage, and villages and spires may be seen even on the tops of the fir-covered knolls. Nearer Ratisbon the swellings spread to a greater extent, so as to form almost a table-land, on which these knolls are more frequent and form the only elevated points. The aspect of the whole is dreary enough—the sombre forests of pine, and the sickly yellow of the pastures and fallows, suggest only images of cold and wet discomfort to the traveller; yet the summer climate of this country cannot be bad, for fruit-trees are seen everywhere studding the bleakest fields, and occasionally bordering the roads. Sheep were abundant, dotting the brown fields; and there were plenty of black cattle.

At Nieumarkt I believe it was that I first observed oxen drawing carts by the horns; a better way, I should think, than, as usual in some countries, by a heavy yoke suspended from the neck: it is the common way all over Bavaria, Austria, and Hungary. Of the Bavarian peasantry I remarked that they seemed to be in circumstances of great comfort; they were well lodged and clothed. The streets of the smaller villages were miry, it is true,

because the weather was wet, and they were not paved; but the houses all seemed comfortable and warm, and there were no huts, or even very mean cottages. The lower orders wore sheep-skin pelisses, or coarse thick great-coats, and hats: those a little higher, had clothes of broad-cloth, caps of the same, and, instead of the great-coat, threw a short cloak or mantle over their shoulders. They were generally well-made and stout, comely but blunt, and of rather a dogged expression of countenance. The women were remarkably comely, small-featured, and plump. They wore the hair shaded back on the brow, and all had combs stuck in it. In their dress, they might be said to have some resemblance to the broom-girls we see in England, but in nothing else, and their petticoats were never so abominably short. Some of the older ones wore that strange-fashioned, black velvet, and lace-trimmed cap, which is exhibited in all collections of European costumes. One thing struck me as remarkable, that with all this appearance of general comfort there should be so many beggars. The moment you enter a village, you are beset by crowds of boys, who bawl out for money in the most importunate way; and in the roads, as you pass along, you are constantly accosted by well-dressed persons on foot, who seem to be travelling, and who are equally urgent in their application for relief. I suspect, however, that an absence of shame, a want of honest pride and feeling, is at the bottom of this, rather than actual poverty.

In reaching Ratisbon, we descended from our altitudes, and got upon a lower level. The country

spreads out here into a flat, apparently subject to the overflow of the Danube; for, during the first two stages of the night, we bowled along a sort of dam that led across a swamp on either side: but it was dark, so that neither of this nor of the city itself can I say anything further, than that I got a capital dinner at the latter, and believe it on all accounts worth seeing.

As morning broke, after passing some heavy sandy road, I was awoke—at Vlisshoven, I think—by the music of the matin service, issuing from a large church close to which we were changing horses. A choir of the sweetest voices broke forth with a full sweep of the organ, just like that delightful strain in the "Freyschutz" which rises from the cathedral on poor Casper when he seeks in vain to free himself from the clutches of his persecutor Zamiel.

We then began once more to ascend, among hills covered with deep pine forests, interspersed with cultivation and villages. Whether the country be as populous in the interior as it appears to be in the line of the great road, I cannot say; if so, it must be both rich and well-cultivated indeed: but the few cross-roads that are seen leading from the great ones might lead to a doubt on that subject; and I may remark that notwithstanding the symptoms of dense population which Bavaria certainly exhibits, I never saw many people either in the fields or in the villages. I cannot help observing, too, in passing, that the transition from Prussia into Bavaria was by no means calculated to impress a traveller with favourable notions of the latter. In the former, as well as

in Belgium, the peasantry were civil, even polite; no one passed you without a salute of some sort: in the latter, no such thing was thought of.

I have already stated the contrast in regard to the face of the country; and that between the roads in each respectively is not less strong. The roads in Bavaria I found execrable, the posting little better; the horses poor; the postilions sulky sullen boors, who seem incapable of returning a civil answer to either question or remonstrance, however gently put. Whatever be the necessity of the case, or the measure of payment given them, they cannot be got to increase their speed, which seldom exceeds six miles an hour, and the smallest hill is the signal for diminishing that to a snail's pace. The horses seem to know this well, for no sooner do they reach the slightest rise than they come to a stand-still: scolding, entreaty, remonstrance, bribery, are alike useless; until you reach the top, there is no acceleration.

As we advanced through the wooded country beyond Ratisbon towards the Austrian frontiers, we found the character of the houses change, and assume that of the Swiss cottage. I have seen similar buildings, too, on the rivers of Demerara, Berbice, and Surinam, built principally of wood, framed, and the interstices filled with bricks, or boarded and clap-boarded, with far-projecting roofs, and balconies around. At one of these, in the village of Furtzunzel, I breakfasted, and experienced a laughable specimen of the inconveniences to which a total want of language exposes a traveller. In asking what they

could give me to eat, I made out coffee and bread and butter well enough; but it came into my head to long for eggs, and I utterly failed in making myself understood. The pretty little hostess ran to everything in the house and brought it me, in hopes it might prove to be the article required; the cheese, the brandy-bottle, and drams of every kind were brought and rejected, and I heartily repented of my imprudent attempt, and would have recalled the order; but this their hospitable kindness would not consent to, so they persevered in their efforts until the whole house was in a sad commotion. I then resumed my efforts; went to the window to see whether there might not be a hen in view: luckily there was not,—luckily I say, for I am persuaded, such was their zeal and their want of apprehension, that the poor thing's neck would have been twisted before I could interfere. All was in vain, and my pretty Bavarian at length threw up her hands in despair, while casting a glance of ludicrous perplexity at me, and while the shouts of laughter, which the failure of every attempt produced from all hands, were reiterated. At length a happy idea struck one of the men; he uttered the magical word, which was re-echoed from half-a-dozen mouths with another burst of laughter at their own stupidity, and, in a moment, as many of the articles in question, fair and fresh, were produced from a cupboard in the same room: I need not add that they were as quickly disposed of.

The progress of a few hours, through tracts of natural forest of larch, spruce, and Scotch fir, among

which, however, there was a remarkable scarcity of even tolerably-sized timber, brought us to the summit and elevation, from whence we were greeted by a prospect which in fine weather must be enchanting, and even at this inclement season, and dull as the sky was, appeared in delightful contrast to the dreary and sombre country through which we had passed. It was a broad valley of undulating ground, all richly varied with grove and copse, and farm and field, and bounded by hills of a similar character. Imagination could not have given a more perfect picture of rural beauty. I do believe there were twenty fine villages in view, each clustered in old trees, from among which rose its picturesque spire; a noble river wound through the whole extent, giving a tone of majesty to a landscape which without it might have been only sweet and lovely. It was English, true English, all but the great river, beyond the size of most British streams, and the fortified town that frowned upon its banks. All else spoke of calmness and tranquillity, and agricultural riches; but the barriers and fortifications told another tale: they spoke of Germany and war, and Austria it was,—fair Austria, tranquil and happy in spite of the despotism that characterizes her patriarchal government. This fortification was Schaerding, the frontier town in this quarter between her and Bavaria; and the river was the Inn, hastening in flood to swell the Danube. The dark-blue colours of Prussia, and the light-blue of Bavaria, had given way to the black and yellow of Austria; and the Imperial eagle, with its double gaze of watchfulness, frowned

from above the wooden bridge by which we crossed the stream.

At the further entrance of this bridge there is a shed under which you pass, and where a partial examination of all carts and waggons takes place. We were asked here, who we were? — but the tender of a couple of florins settled the matter. We crossed the bridge, and I was congratulating myself upon the very great facility with which our transit from one State to another had been effected, when, after passing the gate which leads into the town, I was hailed by a person in the Austrian military garb, who sternly ordered us to stop. The door was unceremoniously opened, and the same person, joined by another, commanded me, with very significant gestures, to alight. Having done so, I was marshalled, much like a delinquent, into a very mean-looking office, where sat half a dozen *commissaires*, all in military costume: this was the Austrian Custom-house, and these were its clerks. My passport was then demanded by a person in plain clothes, who came out of an inner apartment, and who, leading me to a paper posted against the wall, sternly desired me to "read that." It was the rules of the Austrian Customs relative to travellers, written in German, French, and Italian; and severe enough they are. They call upon you to *declare* all you have got, with certain provisions in case you have anything contraband; and informing you, that *after so declaring*, your packages shall be all opened and searched, when, should anything contraband or contrary to your declaration be found, the Custom-

house has the option, in the first case, of insisting on their being returned beyond the frontier, or of passing them on payment of an arbitrary duty; or, in the second, of seizing them altogether as forfeit. In fact, one might imagine the declaration was intended expressly to entrap travellers into some falsehood which may involve the forfeiture of their goods. Whatever may be the origin of this rule, or whatever doubts may be entertained as to its expediency, moral or political, I must say, that in my own case it was a *Brutum fulmen;* for the stern commencement terminated in taking my word for there being nothing in the carriage besides my despatches and baggage,—that is, nothing for sale, nor anything, to my knowledge, contraband. A certificate of full and sufficient search was then handed to me, along with my passport, the former of which was to protect me from further molestation all the way to Vienna, and for this I paid three kreutzers; nothing more was demanded or received. I gave, indeed, a florin to the man who shut the door of the carriage after me, and who looked hungry, and away I drove. What portion of this lenity may have been produced by my courier's passport, I know not; but this I know, that in no place did I meet with more real civility, or so much despatch in the matter of custom-house business.

For three stages, I think, — at all events, to near Lintz,—the same beautiful scenery as that surrounding Schaerding gratified the eye; — swelling lawns, undulating hills, and valleys, varied with coppice, inclosure, fields and villages, in a manner that would

have defied the best landscape-gardener to improve, and cultivation which, whether perfect or not in the eye of a farmer, was at least most pleasing to that of the traveller. Near Bayerbach the hills increased in elevation, and produced upon our rate of progress a sedative effect, which their beauty scarcely compensated; for the Austrian postilions labour under the same innate *vis inertiæ* as the Bavarians, and the smallest hill arrested our speed in a manner truly provoking. I was sorry to be deprived by darkness of all view of our approach to Lintz on the Danube, into the bed of which river the road sank suddenly, and proceeded for a considerable way. That glen is here narrowed to the bare course of the stream by the rocks which form its banks, and the scenery by daylight must be fine. For several miles these rocks, though not of great height, are bold and imposing, and crested with spruce and fir; and at their base, and on the very margin of the river, on either side are numerous cottages and rows of houses, the lights of which glanced cheerily as we passed, and trembled in long lines of reflected brilliancy upon the water. Of Lintz itself I can say nothing, as I passed through it about ten at night, merely refreshing myself with a morsel of dinner; but it seemed to be a fine old German town, with a large *place*.

The country between Lintz and Amstettin is very hilly, as I discovered by the frequent stops to pull off and on the drag; but continued watchfulness had at length terminated in most inveterate drowsiness; the roads were better, the postilions more

careful, anxiety consequently was diminished, and I awoke in the morning in the street of Amstettin, scarcely knowing how I had got there. It was now an object to reach Vienna that night, if possible, in time sufficient to take measures for the prosecution of my journey with all despatch; so paying the postilions well, I breakfasted at Kemmelbach, served by a pretty girl, who spoke French with a queer Dutchified accent, and passed through Möelk, viewing with regret its splendid monastery. But let me say one word more regarding this extraordinary building, which deserves a volume. I have seldom seen anything more imposing. It is a religious edifice, built upon a rocky promontory, that juts into the Danube, and which it covers with an immense extent of towers, domes, and walls; not in the style of a fortification, for it is not fortified; but in that rather of a palace, for again it is too gorgeous for a mere monastery. Without a drawing I can give you no idea of its magnificence; but I think if the inside in any degree corresponds with its external appearance, that it is an object of itself worth coming all the way to Vienna to see.

From this point the country becomes more open and less beautiful, but still richly cultivated, and studded thickly with houses, villages, and towns, which from their white walls have a cheerful effect. At Burkersdorf we ascended a long hill, one of that range which forms the highlands of Austria and Styria, and at the foot of which lies the plain of Vienna, opening into, or rather continuous with the great steppes of Hungary. I hoped from the

summit of this hill to get a view of the Austrian capital, but darkness overtook us ere we got there; and what with bad roads and wearied horses, it was ten o'clock at night ere the lamps in the streets gave me notice that I had entered it. Arrived at the "Römischer Kaiser," my quarters on a former occasion, I had little disposition to do more than unload my carriage, deliver my despatches, and get as fast as I could to the first bed I had entered for eight days and a half, for so long had it been since I left London.

On having my carriage inspected the next day, I found that the needful repairs and alterations would occupy nearly three days; and as some further arrangements were necessary before commencing the second part of my journey through Hungary, I was forced to submit to a delay, which, however pleasant my quarters, was, under all circumstances, very tantallizing. Yet, assuredly, this far-famed capital was not without its attractions to me. I remembered well the happy period I had once spent here, and I was not ill disposed to traverse once more and renew my acquaintance with the scenes of former pleasures: accordingly, procuring a *laquais de place* to assist me in my purchases, and as a guide, I sallied forth in a delightful frosty morning to roam about the city. And I was not altogether disappointed; memory had not quite failed me; and although full twelve years had passed, I did recognise many familiar objects. Yes, it was Vienna; the same splendid imperial Vienna I had formerly known so well; gorgeous in equi-

page and costume; intoxicating with its pleasures, but grand and imposing in its very mirth;—like a luscious peach, all melting richness and beauty without, but bearing in its heart a core of bitter policy — of astute and stern diplomacy — a drop of worse than *Prussic acid*, poisonous and noxious to all but those whose privileged heads and practised stomachs are capable of digesting the potent dose. It was pleasant to retrace the very spots where interesting incidents had occurred at a time of life when all was viewed through a gayer medium than now perhaps: but it was a pleasure not unalloyed; for many of those with whom I had been formerly familiar were no longer there to gladden the scene; and even in some of those who remained, the lapse of years had effected a melancholy change. I did, however, meet with one or two old friends, who welcomed me cordially; and the excellent "spectacle" and opera lent its aid to wile away an hour that might have been tedious: so that in point of amusement and comfort, at least, I had no cause to regret the three days I spent at Vienna.

This evening, please God, I leave this pleasant capital, so I must send off my letter; my next will probably be from Semlin, the frontier town of Hungary, opposed to Belgrade of Turkey, and, as it may be reckoned, the boundary in that quarter of the civilised world.

LETTER II.

Hungarian Villages. — Hogs.—Cattle.—Raab.—Cholera —Change of Postilions. — Hungarian Roads — and " Turn-outs." — An Accident.—An Overturn.—Game Laws, and *Chasses.*—Arrival at Buda and Pest. — Break down second. — Christmas Morn. — Change of Costume. — Villages and Houses. — The Steppes. — Overturn third. — Hungarian Auberge — and Gipsies. — Terezianople. — Nysotts Peterwardin. — Comparative Sketch of European Posting.—Semlin.

Semlin.

DEAR ——,

YOU will see by my date that I keep my word. I have just arrived here after a most disagreeable and painful journey, lengthened out by bad weather and bad roads far beyond the usual term. I have just despatched all other business, and the remaining time I have here shall be employed in giving you a sketch of it: more I cannot give, and more it does not merit.

On the evening of the 22nd, having got my passports and completed my arrangements, I left Vienna a little after nine, and, passing through the Hungarian suburb, was soon on the road to Buda and Pest. One of these arrangements consisted in the engagement of a servant who knew the language and the customs of the country we had to travel through; for I had suffered too much from the want of such assistance to make another attempt without securing

it, and I was fortunate enough to engage a man who had acted as courier on several occasions, and who was, as I understood, perfectly acquainted with the road.

The night was bitter cold—it pinched us through all our furs; and the morning found us dragging along the miry road of a fat Hungarian steppe. The Styrian mountains, capped with snow, were on our right, a level plain on our left; while a bright orange horizon in front gave promise of a fine day. It is true that this promise was soon broken, for rain began to fall: but as the wind was in our back it gave us less concern; and though our progress was not rapid, it was at least uninterrupted.

The Hungarian costume had made its appearance: sheep-skin cloaks, with the fur outside to turn the rain; pelisses both short and long, of that and other materials; thick felt cloaks and boots, with strange-looking, wild, large-brimmed hats, and sometimes handkerchiefs turban wise around the head. The men themselves were ruddy and good-looking. The villages, of which we passed many, though inferior to those of Bavaria and Austria, were formed of decent houses, chiefly wooden.

It could scarcely be matter of surprise that two months of almost continual rain had reduced the whole country, including the village streets, to the condition of a morass, through which the horses waded with difficulty. The state of the roads, however, seemed to offer no obstacle to the advance of prodigious droves of pigs, or rather heavy swine, of exceeding obesity. They were remarkable for being very hairy, especially about the face and throat, with

noses much turned upwards. I can further bear testimony to the excellence of their flesh, having made a capital breakfast at the little commercial town of Weiselburgh, and a dinner at Raab, in which pork was assuredly the principal dish. I have had some reason to believe that the greater number of those animals had come from Servia, where they are fattened in the immense oak forests, and from whence they are sent to supply the markets of Pest and Vienna.

Raab is a town upon the Danube, containing, as I was informed, about thirty thousand souls. We scarcely entered it, but remarked, that amidst oceans of dirt, a disposition at least was evident and an attempt made to cleanse the streets. It was little more, I fear; for the carts which were employed in carting off the mire appeared to have a worse than Augean task to accomplish. I remarked too, that the shops, instead of signs, had representations of the articles in which they dealt painted on the insides of the doors. The suburbs, which were all I saw, resembled what I remember of the Russian towns in the Ukraine and southern provinces; white houses with gavels to the street, and often little yards about them. The villages were also in the same style, the houses being made of mud and white-washed.

The country during this day's journey was quite flat; the soil, a fat black loam upon yellowish grey clay, fit, I should think, for anything; and, in fact, there was a good deal of cultivation, mingled with much larger tracts of unoccupied or pasture-land and forest. The roads, which were

only formed of the soil, without metal, and often bordered with pollard willows, were uniformly execrable, axle-deep in mud. In addition to the droves of hogs, we met a number of cattle going to the Vienna market, all grey, gaunt, and lean, with long spreading horns: a Highland cattle-dealer would have said they were of a *bad stamp*. The sheep, of which we also saw many, were of a far better breed, for they bore strong evidence of a Merino cross.

On entering Raab, my attention was arrested by a more painful object: it was a new burying-ground, large, but perfectly full of graves, at the head of each of which stood planted a yellow post about two feet high with a triangular cap on its top. This, I learned, was the burying-ground appropriated to the victims of cholera, when that fell disease almost depopulated Raab: it was a ghastly spectacle. It is said that two hundred and fifty thousand persons were swept off in Hungary alone.

At this place we took leave of our smart Austrian postilions, with their gallant silver-laced cocked-hats and badges, their red-laced jackets, and their tasseled French horns, on the which they favoured us so often with a flourish or a tune. It is true that the appearance of these functionaries had been getting more shabby for some stages before, but at Raab the change was most mortifying; for, when the horses were yoked, up tottered the vision of an aged man, clad in a ragged wrapper as grey and old as himself, his grey head covered with a grey felt wig, and that with a grey felt hat, whose broad brim

turned upwards like an umbrella surprised by a gust of wind; and, to our dismay, this *Bodach-glass* clambered up "with mickle toil," and floundered into the driving-seat. His age he confessed was eighty-five; and altogether a more unpromising set-out in horses and driver I never saw: yet they belied appearances at first, for they set off at score, and went on at a pace which did not seem to be in them, until a gust of wind blew off the old boy's scraper, and brought us to a stand-still. Much did he seem to doubt whether it were worth while exerting his stiff old carcass to recover his head-gear from the deep mud in which it lay, and it was not until a word from the carriage quickened the current of his cogitations that he got off and replaced it, soaked in mire, upon his head. After this, we went at a far more sober pace; but I must say that this was fully as attributable to the execrable state of the roads as to any diminution in the old man's zeal. Imagine a country perfectly flat; the soil, fat earth, a perfect sponge for water, already subjected to the action of two months' rain, and now scarcely elevated above the level of the overflowing Danube,—not a stone to be found in the whole of it; the roads, made solely of this same soil, thrown up from the side-ditches, and poached by a very large and constant traffic of carts, carriages, and animals of every description: imagine all this, and you have our exact situation. Nor need I describe how we toiled on, nave-deep, plunging from one hole into another, with the springs jerking to their full stretch at every step, and ourselves scarcely able to keep our seats a mo-

ment. Add to this, a night as black as a wolf's mouth, already spitting, and giving ample promise of raining enough to keep up the salutary moisture of the soil, and behold the full sum of our comforts to the next stage, Gönyö, which we fortunately reached without accident.

Here we were informed that no horses were to be had; but the postmaster, after a row and explanation with my servant, at length procured them from the peasants, and, by way of making up for the delay, put four to the carriage instead of two which we paid for. And such a turn-out! What would the masters of the whip in England have said to it,— the dashing drivers of the "Rockets," and "Comets," and "Highflyers," on the Brighton, the Southampton, or the Exeter road? Lean, scraggy, shaggy, small, but unmatched in their dwarfishness, and wild as their brothers and sisters of the steppes, they came in all their native nudity, unprovided with even the small affectation of harness which those of the post-houses generally maintain. They were tied to the carriage and to each other by cords and all manner of indescribable ligaments in such a style, that we could not help entertaining very serious doubts of their getting to the end of the first mile. The box was mounted by a gipsy boy, in robes of unutterable squalidity, and a hat like a monstrous mushroom, who, however, cracked and flourished a long whip in a most knowing manner. But his flourishing and vapouring were soon brought to a close; for, after making a fair start with much difficulty, we had scarcely gone half a mile, when down

came one of the wheelers right under the carriage, and the whole concern was thrown into confusion. "Oh, murder! my horse is killed!" exclaimed the gipsy in his Hungarian dialect; but still he kept his seat, gazing on the fallen and groaning animal for more than a minute before he dropped into the mud to assist it. Then, indeed, he did begin to use his knife with a speed and recklessness that made me fear a reunion of the disjointed parts for the purpose of dragging the carriage might prove impossible; and he hauled and pulled at leg and head with all his might and main, keeping up an accompaniment of lamentation and remonstrance that might have been heard at a mile's distance.

Having ascertained that the beast had fallen clear of the wheels, we did not see any good reason to get out knee-deep in mud to do what he was quite equal to; but it was some time before we could persuade him just to drag one leg out of the way, cause the carriage to move on a few yards, and then apply the whip to his fallen steed. A second lash brought him at once to his feet, and the work of repairing damages commenced. This occupied not far from an hour; but even then, all the indescribable sounds,—the "La-hoh, la-hoh,—Lora, lora,—Wahi,—Hua, hua!" &c. &c.—with which he sought to rouse his cattle to simultaneous exertion, were for sometime intonated in vain, even when combined with frequent additional hints from his whip, and failed to put the carriage in motion. We were three hours in performing ten miles; and, considering the roads and the equipage, the wonder was rather that we

performed it at all, than that we were so long about it.

I had indulged a faint hope that the next stage might furnish us with better means of progress: at all events, I was resolved that no remonstrance or bribe should be wanting to secure them. But this was destined to be a night of disappointment and adventures. The horses were, indeed, more decent than any we had for some time seen; but I could not help remarking to my servant, that the boy whom they gave us as postilion was far too young and too weak to be of use in case of accident.—Boy, indeed! — we discovered by the light of our lamps, the first time he turned his head, that it was a hunchback urchin of fifty at least, and deaf, as we had occasion afterwards to suspect. Away we drove, crashing, jolting, and sinking, first on one side, then on the other, in a manner that no springs or wheels, the work of mortal hands, could possibly have long withstood; for now we found the mud of the road intermingled with huge round stones by way of improvement. In vain we roared out to him to go more softly—to take care; for a long time he could not or would not hear; till at length, when we had made half the post, and were driving on the banks of the Danube, "dark-flowing" enough at that time, and under a sort of hill or rising ground that rose abruptly from them, he pulled up, and, turning his ill-omened countenance towards us as it peeped out from under his enormous hat, he gave us to wit, that we were coming to a "bad step." It proved no less, indeed. The country had somewhat changed

its character, and we had reached the foot of certain low hills proceeding from the mountains on our right; and the road had been further destroyed by an attempt to repair it with the round stones they afforded. The consequence was the formation of a succession of irregular heights and holes, the latter of which were partly filled with mud and the said stones. Into these we now plunged to a depth from which the most violent efforts of the horses could scarcely extricate us, and which unsettled the whole machine. At length, in his endeavours, I suppose, to keep as far as possible from the river-side, which was, assuredly, quite close enough and entirely unguarded, he hugged the hill-foot: the right-hand wheels rose on the slope, while the left went right into a huge miry pit. Instead of whipping the horses to extricate the vehicle, unhappy hunchy rather checked them, and over we went on one side, at once, into the thick, fat mud-porridge!

The confusion this accident created may be conceived: every article of baggage was displaced, and the contents of the carriage were heaped upon ourselves as we lay heads downwards. Sensible that the mud, which oozed in on all sides, might soon smother us if we did not extricate ourselves, we made an effort, and the servant, who was uppermost, contrived to get out. He stepped at once over the knees, and waded to extricate the miserable postboy, who was jammed in his seat, so that without help he might have stuck there till now. Soon after, I got out myself, and only then comprehended the full "agrémens" of our condition.

There lay our carriage, *down-hill*, the thick mud in which the hood rested, and which was oozing slowly in through all creeks and crannies, alone preventing it from falling over on its top; so that it was plain the efforts of at least half-a-dozen men would be requisite to raise it once more on its wheels; — and foolish enough, in all conscience, we looked, with our miserable hunchbacked postilion alone to aid us. What was to be done? To remove the things and lighten the carriage, was the first and most obvious measure: but where could we put them? — I had just proposed sending off Hunchback on one of the horses to seek for aid at the first village, when the appearance of two brilliant lights, the sure heralds of an equipage, induced us to hope for more immediate help: — it was, in fact, a carriage-and-four, and we hailed them as they came up, that they might not run over us. A voice from within called out to know what was the matter, as the postilions drew up: a query of "whether there was room between the hill and our carriage?" was heard in reply to the annunciation of our misfortune. The stranger's carriage got into motion, drew up to the hill, and passed us at a rapid pace. "They are going to stop when they pass us," said my servant, with a rather stupid stare; but there seemed no such disposition on their part, and I called aloud myself for them to stop: they did so, — heard our solicitation for aid, and drove rapidly off. Perhaps they possessed little means of assisting us; probably they had no notion of getting head-over-ears in mud in

the attempt: to us, at all events, the desertion appeared heartless in the extreme, and my servant was not delicate in expressing his disgust and disappointment.

We now sent Hunchback off for assistance. The nearest village was full five miles distant, so we had nothing to do but to wait as patiently as we might until his return. Placing the servant, therefore, to watch the road, I retired from the rain into the *hood* of the fallen vehicle; and as misery acquaints us with strange beds, as well as bedfellows, I soon fell asleep, enveloped in a clothing of mud, and reclining on the heterogeneous contents of our discomfited britchka. Not long after, a furious frosty wind drove my servant from his post in beside me, just as the noise of wheels again awakened our hopes. This time it was a large waggon, attended by several men, and we were sure of help: but with them, too, it was only "Hollah! what's that? what's the matter? overturned?" — then a short conversation between the waggoner and my servant, and they also, like the Priest and the Levite, "passed by on the other side." Sleep was now driven away by indignation; so, lighting a candle with my match-box, I groped out my journal, and noted out the incidents of the night as I sat in the floating hood. It reminded me of our friend J. H. who having been stopped and plundered by some banditti in Spain, sat down upon a bank and coolly amused himself with sketching the group of robbers as they rifled his trunks and portmanteaus before his eyes.

At length, after the lapse of two hours, which to

us seemed as long as two nights, our ears were greeted by the voice of little Humpy, announcing his arrival with five men to our aid. All was now alertness and hope; but the business proved to be one of great difficulty; for so deep was the mud that no one standing in it could exert his strength to any advantage, and it was only by applying some sticks which they had luckily brought with them, as *shores* to maintain the ground that was won inch by inch, that at length the machine was raised a few feet. The horses were then attached, and by their efforts in dragging, and those of our united party in lifting, the unfortunate britchka was dragged from the slough of despond, where it had lain so long, and placed once more upon its wheels. A sorry sight in truth it was, and sorely battered did we find it. As for ourselves, it is not to be told what figures we were; yet, dripping as we were with mire, in we were forced to get, and in this piggish state did we make up our minds to proceed to Pest, forty-five miles further.

By this time it was broad daylight, and we slowly proceeded to the village, where the amount of our damages were ascertained to consist of one lamp demolished, the hood considerably twisted, and the pin which unites the fore part of the carriage to the perch much crooked. The latter, which was the most material affair, was soon repaired by the village smith, and, after rewarding our friendly assistants, we once more took the road. Had I ever entertained doubts as to the expediency of taking a servant on this part of my journey, this accident

would have removed them: for what could I have done, alone and entirely without language, with my humpbacked postilion, in circumstances of such embarrassment! I thanked God I had been wise enough to decide as I did.

We had now entered among the low hills which I have mentioned above, consisting of red, yellow, or grey earth, chiefly the produce of decomposed rock. Beyond lay still loftier ranges, covered in some places with wood, oak, and chestnut; in others, cultivated to the top, the green of the young wheat already giving them a rich emerald hue. In some places, where the natural wood had been cut, I observed plantations of acacia protected by enclosures, which, I was told, was for the encouragement of game. I had looked in vain for those vast forest tracts in which a Prince Esterhazy, or a Palfi, or a Batiani, give those splendid *chasses* which one hears of in England, and which every sportsman desires to witness: but though our road led through the domains of several of these nobles, and their preserves were pointed out to me, I saw nothing that filled the imagination up to the point excited by the accounts I have alluded to; in fact, the forest patches seemed scarcely more extensive than many natural woods and artificial plantations I have seen at home; and though in other parts of Hungary the forests are, no doubt, more dense and extensive, I found upon inquiry, if I may trust to my informants, that these grand *battues* are generally held in the less extensive woods, as affording better and more easy sport than the wilder tracts; that, in fact, it was much

the same as in England, only on a somewhat greater scale, and that all the sport depended upon preservation of the game. The game, accordingly, is preserved with excessive strictness; and the arbitrary nature of the game-laws is calculated to aid this aristocratic proceeding, in a country where there could be no sale for game, and, consequently, but little temptation to poaching. I was told, that if a peasant were seen trespassing on any preserve, he might be shot like a wolf or mad dog. This is preserving—these are game-laws with a vengeance!

The village where we repaired damages was inhabited chiefly by persons engaged in the quarrying and working a species of red marble which is found in the hills here, and which, I understand, takes a beautiful polish. The traffic which this manufacture occasions on the roads does not, undoubtedly, improve them, any more than the fragments of stone which are strewed upon them without method or judgment. Thus we continued subject to jolts of the most alarming description. In one part, indeed, an attempt had been made to form a regular road of this stone; but, fortunately, it extended only a short way, for it was intolerably rough. As to that which passed through the villages, I cannot attempt to describe it: to foot-passengers it was in many places impassable; and we observed little pathways of corn-stalks laid along to render the crossings from one side of the street to the other practicable. In fact, were it not for the boots worn by all, of every sex and age, they could scarcely hold communication with their next neighbours. These boots,

which are cut in the hussar fashion, and are made of pigskin, are so greased and prepared as to be little harmed by moisture: it is well that such is the case, for at this season they are never dry for an hour together. I had ocular demonstration of the use of these frail causeways; for I saw the women of the village skipping and tripping along them—then plunging, with petticoats lifted high, into the well-worked mud, and wading to their destination: and such women! great Tartar-like figures, with short jackets, or large shaggy sheepskins, like the men,—fearful objects indeed.

From hence to Buda, where we arrived about five in the evening, the road wound among hills, many of which were covered with vineyards that produce the fine red Hungarian wine. The Danube rolled its waters a considerable way to our left, and many towns and villages were seen studding the country. Among these was Grān, the seat of the Archbishop of Hungary, who is building a church in a very conspicuous position upon a hill, on the model, it is said, of St. Peter's at Rome, and of immense size. He might find better ways of spending his large revenues, probably; for I do not understand that the people hereabouts are over-strict in their religious notions;—as a proof of which, I was told that Catholics and Protestants bury their dead side by side in the same churchyard: so that here at least all differences of creed are terminated in the grave.

The traffic near Buda is so great, that all vestiges of a road disappeared as we approached it, and

the driver of each cart or carriage took through the fields the course he thought best. It is said that this shameful neglect of the means of traversing the country has its origin, like many other of the national ills of Hungary, in the constitution of its government; the jealousy with which the nobles regard any measure emanating from Vienna, and the utter want of unanimity among themselves. The Emperor of Austria, in fact, has but small power in Hungary; he gets little from the country except recruits for his army, and a trifling sum of money. The diet of nobles do everything that is done — and that is very little — to benefit the country. I understood they had been sitting twelve months at Presburgh in consultation upon some important national points, but had not come to a decision upon any. I believe there are some grounds of complaint against Austria of a commercial nature; but as I did not hear anything to be depended on upon that subject, I can say nothing about it. Great pity it is, at all events, that they cannot come to some understanding regarding their roads.

The ancient city of Buda, so far as I saw, seems to consist of one street of irregular houses, at least a mile and a half long, half buried in mud and filth, running along the foot of a range of rocky hills, one of which is castellated and crowned with the fortified part of the old town. In this is the King's Palace, at this time occupied by one of the archdukes, as Palatinate of Hungary. I have no doubt that this old place may contain things worth seeing, though I saw them not; at all events, the castellated

rock, as it rose over the town and noble river, looming larger in the twilight, was sufficiently imposing. The appearance of Pest, the new town which has sprung up within these some years, and which occupies the opposite side of the river, is particularly fine and prepossessing. It presents to view several regular rows of handsome modern houses, built of stone or brick and whitewashed; and, reflected in the river, made a very pleasing show; but it has none of those picturesque domes or fantastic spires which impart so peculiar a character to the old German cities. The Danube, here, I should think, scarce a quarter of mile broad, is spanned by a bridge of boats, which joins the two cities: this in winter is taken up, on account of the ice which floats down, and passengers are forced to have recourse to ferry-boats.

We proceeded to a very tolerable hotel, called "The Hunting-horn;" where, having sent for a coachmaker to repair damages, I indulged myself with a comfortable purification, and with a good dinner. The repairs occupied some four hours, and it was not till a little before ten at night that I was again in the carriage, and on the way towards Semlin. But our career this night was not destined to be smooth, any more than on the preceding one: our driver, who appeared more willing than skilful, attended rather to speed than safety; so that as the road was little superior to that we had left behind us, the effect was likely to be the same. We had suffered some severe jolts, and were vociferating loudly to the

man to be cautious, when our mouths were shut, and our words cut short, by the body of the carriage coming down with a thump upon the perch, in consequence of the leather of the right forespring breaking short near the top. It was sufficiently vexatious: we had made a fine start, as we thought "all right," and had scarce cleared the town, when behold us at a stand-still! Our vicinity to the town, indeed, was the only lucky part of the affair, for one moment's glance showed us that we could not get on without the assistance of a saddler; so back at once we drove the shattered carriage, we walking on foot through the mire to the house of an artist whom our coachman recommended.

It was now within little better than an hour of Christmas-morning, a most unlikely time to find any one ready to take our job in hand, for we had every reason to expect that we should have both superstition and ill-humour to contend with at so ill-chosen a time. We were lucky enough, however, to find not only expert, but willing workmen, who, though summoned from their beds, received us civilly, and undertook the job with perfect readiness. It was a pair of brothers to whom we were so much obliged (for obligation it was, in the full sense of the word): they rose with alacrity, set themselves to work with skill, and so efficiently did they exert themselves, that as the clock struck twelve we were entering the carriage, having satisfied our obliging saddlers with a comparatively small remuneration. The bells were ringing, and the people all stepping along the

streets, with lanterns, to church and chapel, as we passed once more through the town; but an anxious time we had until we reached the first stage, for the remembrance of the past was before us, and fear of the future could not be altogether avoided.

It was at daylight, on as bleak a Christmas-morning as ever dawned, that I looked out for the first time upon the regular steppe of Hungary, which now stretched around us. Misty and interminable it seemed, marked here and there only by a single tree, with a cluster of cottages in front,—a true Hungarian village. The whole, village and all, put me much in mind of the steppes of Southern Russia; but the faces of the people had so much of the Tartar physiognomy, that I might almost have fancied myself somewhere on the borders of Toorkestan. The women, in particular, bore that character of countenance; and not one of them, young or old, was even tolerably good-looking.

The change which the costume of the men had been gradually undergoing from that of Austria was now complete. The lower orders wore shirts of coarse stuff,—sometimes, I suspect, none at all, —large loose canvass trowsers, no stockings, but long Hungarian boots. Blue or dark green cloth waistcoats, with several rows of white round metal buttons, and tight highly-embroidered trowsers, were affected by those who could afford them. The richer, and those of the better classes, wore over all a sort of surtout of cloth; but the external covering most common to all was the *boonda*, or sheepskin pelisse. This is common to

young and old of both sexes, and, generally, of all conditions. It is a long, ample covering, which may either be worn with the wool outside or inside: the latter mode is generally adopted; but in rain, when the skin or leather would be spoiled by wet, they turn the shaggy side without. The leather is often ornamented with a very neat embroidery in coloured silks, representing flowers; sometimes they are painted with various devices, and their wearers always throw over the shoulders the skin of a black or grey lamb, with its feet stretched out on either side, by way of an additional ornament: the effect is better than one might imagine, giving a furred richness of look to what otherwise is but a gown of embroidered yellow leather. The cost of these boondahs is from twelve to thirty florins of silver, say from twenty-four to sixty shillings, according to the workmanship. I believe the mere wrappers of the poor are still cheaper: the boots so universally worn cost from one and a half to three silver florins, according to quality. But the most marked and singular piece of Hungarian costume is the enormous hat worn by the peasantry: it is made of coarse brown felt, and of most extravagant dimensions, with a little low rounded crown and enormous brim. I do not think I exaggerate when I say that these brims would, if standing straight out from the head, measure four feet across: but this monstrous margin is tilted up all round, so as to form a broad deep trough between it and the crown, most inconvenient, I should think, in heavy rain. At some distance they look like enormous mushrooms; but when closer, and that you see their construction, they

rather suggest the idea of some great brown flower of the ranunculus sort, the petals of which are represented by the brim, while the crown stands up for the round cluster of stamina and pistils in the centre. What they do with these extravagant scrapers in case of rain, I do not know; for though we had plenty of rain on the way, our postilions seldom could boast of a whole hat, so that the water ran off at the gaps.

The costume of the women is not very remarkable. They wear boots, like the men, and tie blue or other coloured handkerchiefs on their heads, bringing a fold over the mouth to protect them from the cold; a fashion, one might think, borrowed from their Eastern neighbours. Another handkerchief covers the bosom, and sometimes is crossed by a second of a different hue, over a short body-jacket of some bright colour; and their long hair, platted into queues, hangs behind, in the fashion of the Tartars.

The villages in which these people dwell are situated in oceans of mud, that seem utterly impassable; but the houses themselves, when you have attained them, are comfortable enough. The best are built of brick, and thatched with straw or reeds. Only the public buildings, such as town-houses and churches, have a covering of woody shingles. They are all whitewashed, and are generally furnished with one or two windows, painted of a bright green colour: even the houses of the poorer classes, though only built of mud and reeds, were all nicely whitewashed, and appeared warm and comfortable within. These villages, particularly as we advanced, were of

great size and very populous, though but thinly scattered over the country: but we observed a sort of hamlets, or even single houses, frequently sprinkled on the plain between them; and these, we were informed, were places for gathering and folding the sheep. They consisted, generally, of a tolerably well-built house, surrounded by some wretched huts of reeds and thatch, sometimes of a single large shed, and are called *boostas*. The huts are the dwellings of the *gooliashes*, or shepherds, who never leave their charge; and we used to see them in all weathers standing like statues under their monstrous hats and sheepskins, watching the sheep at pasture. At night, too, we often came upon groups of them, picturesquely seated round a fire; for, unless when the sheep are housed, the sky and their pelisses are the only covering of these hardy shepherds.

Leaving Potshaza,—for so was the village called where we breakfasted with the fiscal of the place, a man of letters and an author,—we struck into the wide steppe; for here all regular roads are at an end, and each man takes the best path he can find. We proceeded, sometimes among patches of cultivation, sometimes on the natural surface of the plain, often dashing through great pools of water, not unfrequently sinking deep in clay or mud, and occasionally, though rarely, finding a piece of hard ground where we could get along at a good pace. There were a few cattle and some sheep seen pasturing at large, but everywhere plenty of hogs: your Hungarian is truly a porcivorous animal. Approaching the next stage, we saw numbers of people, all dressed in their

holiday-clothes, crowded into the country carts, or chars-à-bancs, on their way to join some Christmas festivity; and fain would I have had, at least, a day of rest myself. But no rest was there for us, so on we scoured, or dragged like snails, according to the road; sometimes through morasses, where the path was most difficult to find; at others, through wide floodings of some swoln stream, where there was none at all; till, at length, the face of the country changed from a flat clayey plain to a sandy tract, of irregular heights and hollows. The guidance of the carriage among these became most difficult; for in following the tracks of other wheels we often sank with one side into a hole, in a manner which threatened a repetition of our former summerset, and in seeking for a new path the risk run was still greater. At length our charioteer, forgetting, doubtless, that he had not one of his country-carts to deal with,—it had been better for us if such *had* been the case,—in trying to guide the britchka over a narrow neck between two hollows, fairly turned it over, and down went the unfortunate vehicle with a worse crash than before.

Fortunately, none of us were much hurt; and still more fortunate was it that a party of Sclavonian merchants, with their carts and horses, were just behind. So, as they came trotting up, we prevailed on them, for a consideration, to help us in placing our unlucky equipage once more on its wheels, and on we went again. But evening was already falling, and it became a serious subject of consideration what we were to do. The nature of the road, which

we knew, was generally the same all the way to Semlin, rendered the recurrence of such accidents most likely, and we could not be always sure of a party of Sclavonians in the wide steppe. Another upset might disable our carriage, not to speak of ourselves, to whom a broken limb would have been no trifle in so remote a place, and thus cause not only great inconvenience, but delay; and I seriously considered the expediency of leaving our britchka, the height of which made it more liable to overturn, behind; and purchasing one of the chàrs-à-bancs of the country, whose general construction being better calculated for such roads, rendered accidents of that nature less probable.

A thick fog, which came on at night fall, and which forced us to proceed great part of the remaining way to the stage on foot, and the extreme difficulty the postilion had even thus to find his way and keep the carriage on its legs, decided me, for the night at least, to tempt Providence no further; so driving to the auberge at Izāk—so was the village named — instead of to the post-house, I ordered beds and dinner, and until the latter was ready, amused myself with listening to a party of gipsy musicians, who, taking advantage of the season to make money of their talents, had come upon speculation to the village. They played a number of curious original Hungarian airs, chiefly dances and waltzes: most of them resembled the Polish music I have heard, but one of them was neither more nor less than a good Scotch reel; I wish I could have committed it to paper or to memory for you. The whole, I should

say, was decidedly elegant and tasteful, worthy to be placed in any lady's collection. The instruments on which they played were three; a clarionet, a large bass viol, and a dulcimer of great size and complicated structure. This last was played by the chief of the band with infinite skill and power; indeed, it was by far the most effective instrument of the band. These gipsies, or *dzigaines*, as they are here called, were good-looking fellows, with dark eyes and eyebrows, and one of them a tall stout man. There are many of their tribe scattered over Hungary, where their habits and professions are nearly the same as in other countries. Among these is that of musicians to the villagers on feast-days or dances; and if all are as able as those I heard, the honest villagers are well off in this respect.

The auberge in which I had taken up my quarters was kept by a Jew, and proved very decent. Our dinner was excellent, and our beds clean; the covering, as in Germany, a feather-bed, which the coldness of the weather rendered in nowise unacceptable. I must add to that, the charges were moderate.

Next morning we were forced to continue our way in the mist, which still shrouded the country, and which terminated in a heavy fall of rain and sleet. When this cleared away, we found ourselves among a number of gentle heights and hollows, rich, and partially cultivated: to these succeeded another sandy tract, and thus wore on the day. It was not without difficulty that we kept the carriage on its wheels; but a further consideration of the proposed change to country-carts induced me to abandon that

plan. The severity of the weather would have rendered it extremely harassing to ourselves; and upon inquiry I did not find that even the chars-à-bancs themselves were to be depended upon, while the loss in sale and purchase would have been considerable; nay, there was no certainty of getting a tolerable cart nearer than Terezianople, and that was not far from our journey's end: so we decided on sticking to the old britchka as long as it would hang together.

We proceeded with little further adventure during the day, except a "row" with the postmaster of Melcoote, the next station to Terezianople, who first refused to give us horses at all, and then insisted on our taking and paying for four. It turned out that the man wanted to have us as guests for the night, with a view to the profits he might derive therefrom, although his house was not a regular auberge. Foiled in this object, he was resolved to extract what he could in another way; and the opposition to his proposal of the four horses occasioned a most abusive war of words between my servant and him. But these people have a wonderful way of coming to terms after the hardest conflicts of this kind. An Englishman would have felt sore and sulky for the whole day; but our Hungarian, after his bluster, insisted — not disinterestedly, as it turned out, — that we should stay and eat and drink with him. There was no help for it: I scolded, protested, and looked big; but my friend had the right end of the stick, and he kept it. He gave us not a bad dinner, with some thin wine, and at first af-

fected the liberal, and would receive nothing. The wife was not so obdurate; a hint was thrown out, and the lady accepted four twenty-kreutzer pieces, about twice as much as the viands were worth. This had the effect of producing the horses; but less than four he would not give, and less than the price of four he would not receive. I protested again, and paid it. Afterwards, I found that at this season he had *a right* to insist on four being taken; and, in the end, we had cause to be thankful that we had them.

Night was now setting in; we had a long and difficult stage before us; and the moon, which at first shone out brightly, became obscured before we had made two miles of way. I will not attempt to describe the painful tediousness of this stage of twenty long miles: it was seven hours of continued anxiety, during every minute of which we were in constant alarm of an overturn, and kept rolling about and clinging to either side the carriage, as the sinking or rising of the wheels into the deep holes of mud or sand gave us token of danger. Nothing was more annoying than the long, long approach to the city of Terezianople itself, which, like the cup of Tantalus, seemed ever to fly us. But I am totally at a loss to express my astonishment and disappointment when we reached it. I had been taught to expect in the favourite residence of the celebrated Maria-Theresa — for such, it seems, it had been — a regular city, with paved streets and rows of houses, like the modern towns of Germany. Alas! who would have imagined himself to be enter-

ing such a city, or any city, that, in the palpable darkness, felt only an increase of the severe jolts to which he had been for hours exposed in the open country; who heard the splashing of the seas of mud and water that flooded the torrent-bed-like alleys which did duty for streets; that saw, as he dragged along his weary way, dark masses far apart, rising in dim succession, shapeless and lightless, like the ghosts of departed tenements? Not a light—not a human being was visible, as we toiled through these weary streets; and when we at length stopped at what we were assured was an auberge, it seemed as if all the appearances of desertion were realized, for not a sound could we elicit in reply to all the exertions of our postilion in roaring and thumping with stones on the gate.

I fancy the owner of this house must have been some friend of the driver's, for he persisted with a pertinacity most annoying in his useless summons; and after nearly half-an-hour's loss of time, it was with difficulty we could get him to drive to another place. Here also we were so long detained, that we began to believe our destiny was to spend the remainder of a cold and stormy night in the open street, when at length the gates were opened, and we soon found ourselves in the kitchen, or rather family-room, of a decent German inn. The family, though roused from their beds, were civil and hospitable; and coffee and wine, with some bread and butter, served to cheer our hearts until our beds were prepared; and the old grandmother of the party, a perfect model of German

politeness and substantial kindness, did her best to entertain us. I cannot say our quarters were equal to those of the preceding night, nor were the charges altogether so moderate as our accommodations might have justified; but, on the whole, it was a fair outturn to a foul commencement, and we were contented.

Next morning, while slowly piloting our way through the oceans of mud and water which, it appeared, everywhere usurped the place of streets in Terezianople, we had an opportunity of seeing the vast extent of this strangely scattered city. Land indeed here may be of little value, but time is, to some at least, and had the engineer who laid out the plan of Terezianople reflected on that fact, he would have had some mercy on those who now have to go miles instead of yards in proceeding from one house to another. Each is planted, so far as I saw, in a garden or yard of greater or less dimensions; which causes such a spread, that there seemed no termination to the place, at least within our view. When at length we had extricated ourselves from the maze, we entered on a wide road, all poached by the feet of cattle into a succession of ridges, and holes, and rough recesses, which a severe frost during the night had converted into something like very large gravel. This was no great improvement, so far as the safety of the springs or the ease of the travellers was concerned; but we got on, and the danger of an overturn was less; so we set our teeth, held on, and bore the jolts, and felt delighted at the thought that every stage which we thus

passed so much more speedily than heretofore was tending fast to terminate a portion of the journey which had become extremely irksome. In fact, I was weary of the unceasing anxiety that attended travelling in a carriage through countries where the uncertainty of all connected with proceeding—horses, postilions, harness, &c. not to talk of the annoyances of brutal or greedy postmasters—was so great, and, above all, where the want of roads so constantly subjected one to accidents, that I longed to get to those where the carriage should be exchanged for horses, and we should, as I hoped, gallop away, unhampered by vehicles—unannoyed by doubts and fears. We shall see in the sequel whether these hopes shall be realised.

The country, after passing Terezianople underwent a change of character. Instead of the absolute flat or irregular sandy heights over which we had been passing ever since crossing the Danube at Pest, we now entered on a succession of more regular wavy swells, with long tracts of downy land, divided by wide and deep dells, each being the bed of some small stream; the whole of immensely deep soil, no doubt alluvial, and fit for all agricultural purposes. Near the city, cultivation spread widely, and we passed several large villages; but these became rarer and the cultivation more circumscribed as we advanced, till at length both were confined to the stages, or to distances on either side the road of equivalent length. In passing through these villages, we remarked, on what might be taken for the footpath in front of the houses, rows of round heaps,

like large mole-hills: these are the tops or entrances of vaults, hollowed out of the ground, and plastered with clay to keep them water-tight, and which serve as cellars and granaries to the inhabitants. The cultivation appears to be very rude: the use of manure seems to be unknown; at least, it is obvious that the practice is to take from a certain patch of land as many crops as it will bear, and then let it lie fallow for several years. But the soil, under tolerable management, would be equal to anything, and the whole of that part of Hungary which I passed through might be a garden—a granary for Europe; indeed, might not the same be said of nearly all the land from Austria and Styria, eastward to the Don — to the Volga? But man is a strangely perverse animal; he seldom knows or appreciates the blessings he possesses, while he pants after those beyond his reach: or, rather, in accordance with that mysterious balance of good and evil which may be traced throughout creation, this blindness and discontent is oftentimes assigned him as his share of ill; Why else, or by what singular dispensation of Providence, does it happen that the richest and fairest portions of the globe are either desolate, or if peopled and cultivated, a prey to tyranny and slavery; while the ruder parts, which can only be made productive by toil and pains, are happy and free, the seat of industry and improvement? It is not enough to reply, "These rich lands become naturally objects of ambition or of desire to the powerful robber or the grasping tyrant:" the question, "Why is this permitted?" still remains unsolved.

But this is a wide, interminable subject, and we are travelling post, and there is no time to discuss it here. I may observe, however, in passing, that the land here was not utterly waste: sheep were seen in plenty — all of the Merino breeds; hogs and geese seemed the only other domestic animals to which much attention was paid; and of the latter particularly, large flocks were swimming about in great pools, formed by the lazy streams that flowed by every village.

It was past one o'clock on the succeeding morning before we reached the town of Nysotts, situated on the bank of the Danube, which we were here once more to cross. Nysotts is a new town, the offspring of trade, and forming the mart and shipping port to Pietervaradyn (or Peterwardin), a fortified town of considerable importance on the opposite bank. In summer these are united by a bridge of boats, like that of Buda and Pest; but, like that too, it is taken up in winter to let the ice pass downwards, and such was the case at present; so we had not only to rouse the sleeping boatmen, but to wait near an hour before they got the huge boat that was to take our carriage across to a position for receiving it. In the mean time, I may tell you that this Nysotts is situated at the entrance of a large canal, partly natural, I believe, and partly artificial, which forms a means of transport for produce from the very centre of Hungary. The consequence has been, riches, prosperity, trade, bustle, employment. Is not this a speaking fact for the Hungarians — a lesson full of value? No country, perhaps, is better calcu-

lated for excellent roads and canals, so far as surface is concerned: industry would soon supply materials for the first, and science line out courses for the second; but intelligence, energy, capital, unanimity, are wanting as yet. Let us hope that the time is not far distant when the Hungarians themselves, as well as their ruler, whoever he may be, shall see their true and mutual interests, and work together to turn their rich desert into a happy and well-peopled country.

We crossed in twenty minutes, and were landed at a gateway in the fortress, which frowned from a high, earthy hill over the river. Its grim lines and angles of massy wall, pierced with formidable rows of port-holes, all in deep shadow below, contrasted well with the long rows of barracks and arsenals, all trim and whitewashed, which crowned the height and glittered in the moonshine,—and the whole had a fine imposing effect. But we experienced in no small degree the delay which passing through a fortified town always produces, aggravated by the insolence of a rude postmaster. This person not only insisted on our taking four horses, in which, as I said before, we found he was justified, but he detained us full forty minutes, to feed them, as he said, leaving us all the time freezing in the *Place*, where the post-house is situated. As to the four horses, glad enough we were to have them in the sequel, the stage proving a very severe one; for not only had the universal mud been converted by the hard frost into stones and rocks of most rugged character, but it appeared that from Peterwardin we had to

ascend and cross a range of rather lofty hills, which here advanced to the brink of the Danube, and on the last point of which the fortress is built.

Sad, sad indeed was the jolting, but it was fear for the consequences to our carriage that annoyed us most; and the vigorous exertions of four really good horses, though they gave us the prospect of a speedy arrival at our next stage, kept us in continual dread of a more inconvenient termination to our career before we could reach it. Reach it, however, by the mercy of Providence, we did, and by the dawn of one of the most glorious mornings I ever beheld. The frost had become intense, and the brilliancy of the crimson and orange and yellow, which spread over the lower part of the sky, and floated into that unspeakably delicate green which unites these colours with the azure above, was almost beyond what I ever remember to have seen. The blue itself was unusually deep, and the changes produced by the approach of sunrise, until all colour was lost in the flood of yellow light, were past description splendid. But it was cold, — bitter, bitter cold: our feet were nipped through our fur boots, and our hands were rendered almost powerless. Our wheels, from want of grease, had almost set themselves on fire by the friction; but the water which we poured on them became fixed almost before it dropped on the ground: and, to add to our discomfort, it was too early to get into any house in the village.

The postmaster at this stage (its name was Beshka) declared he had no horses, and we had next to fight a battle with him about procuring them. It

now remained no question whether the number was to be four or two; the point was, could we get them at all? A very vigorous remonstrance at length produced four quadrupeds indeed, but more like cats than horses, — little, lean, and shaggy beyond description. We rejected them with indignation; but, after a negotiation with which I will not tire you, and an attempt to procure peasants' horses, which failed, we were glad to receive them such as they were, and set off from Beshka, after two hours' delay, a spectacle that would have moved the mirth of an anchorite. To our poor old britchka,—

> "Its gilding and its beauty all besmirtched
> With constant driving on the muddy roads,"

with overturns and evil weather; cased in a coat of dirt from every soil between Calais and where we stood, — were attached four creatures, the appearance of which would have sorely puzzled a naturalist: he might have taken them for Cinderella's mice, so far as size was concerned, had the rest of our equipage corresponded, — all of different colours, and each surpassing the other in littleness: shaggy they were, and wild as any pony from a Highland bog; and well might their owner know them, for they were marked all over with scalds and blains, and blotches, of most curious variety and the most marvellous ill-favour. To have seen the harness which attached these animals to the vehicle would have puzzled the brains and turned the stomach of a Cuff or a Wilson; for not a shred of leather was to be detected on any part of the concern, except one strap of some sort of skin which suspend-

ed the traces of the wheelers over their backs. Certain appearances about their collars, too, seduced me into the belief that these also rejoiced in some stray patches of the same material; but it was a vain fancy, — no such thing existed. As for the leaders, they were unconscious of aught but the long ropes which attached them to the pole, and which hung over their backs in slings of coarse twine. No bridle insulted their free mouths; a hempen halter, with a thong of twine, was all that indicated their subjection to a driver's rule. And such drivers!—for two of them we had, a coachman and postilion,— God wot!— the former functionary, little, but bold, like the animals he drove, his upper quarters clad in a ragged jacket of sheepskin, his nether man in tight but equally ragged felt pantaloons, which had once been white and embellished with embroidery: the mushroom-like hat which covered his shock-head had seen some better, but more of evil days; and his legs were, as a seaman would express it, *served* round with an amorphous strip of cloth, and further guarded by sandals of untanned hide, well fastened with thongs of the same. The postilion was a far smarter youth: he also rejoiced in a pair of thick felt "tights," and his bow-legs were adorned with the same apology for stockings and shoes; but his sheepskin jacket was new, and stained or embroidered with staring red and green flowers; and his head was protected by a sort of Welsh wig-like covering of sheepskin turned inside out.

The postilion was thrown up upon the leader's bare back by the hands of his ragged companion,

who then clambering up to the driving-seat himself, clawed up the ribbons, and set up an eldrich hue-and-cry, composed of the most indescribable sounds, "eh, hua! hua!—yo, yo—ch, eh—oloo, oloo—hu, hu—adda!" and a hundred other provocations, to induce the steeds to move; but no,—their mood was not active, and even the most unmeasured application of a certain thong, without any handle, wielded by the little Jehu, for some time failed of producing the smallest indication of an intention to proceed. At length, by the combined efforts of drivers and bystanders, they commenced a feeble crawl; but their irregular mode of movement exhibited a propensity to independent action by no means calculated to accomplish the objects of either travellers or drivers, so that a further exertion of foreign aid became necessary. By degrees they were coaxed to the edge of a descent, and, as all grovelling impulses are more readily obeyed than those of a more elevated character, by horses as well as men, down they went, dragging carriage and all along with them. The first ascent proved a stumbling-block, the second almost brought us to a stand-still; and as it needed no ghost to tell us that with such means we should never succeed in performing a twenty-mile stage, we resolved, *coûte qu'il coûte*, to procure other, or, at least, additional horses at the next village.

Fortunately for us, a plain of some miles in extent, without hills, alone intervened between us and the nearest village, so that we arrived there soon, and soon struck a bargain; but it was only for two additional beasts, no full set, sufficient for the job,

being at the time procurable. The new-comers proved to be of exactly the same description as those we had, but it was, at all events, an accession of strength; and in ten minutes they were attached to the insulted britchka, three behind and three before, with a like admirable simplicity of harness. Up, then, jumped on one of them, the owner of this congruous addition, himself in costume and aspect harmonizing most felicitously with his two brethren of the whip. Up, next, on the box clambered both coachman and late postilion, where they sat like the two kings of Brentford, each seizing a rein and each flourishing a thong over the heads of the devoted animals. Another burst of the parting concert of " yu, oudah! hus,"—another well-concerted effort on the part of the numerous bystanders, who witnessed the whole affair with perfect gravity as a customary incident,—and away went the horses with a snort and a grunt, yet scarcely forcing their arduous way over the rough frozen streets of the village. Spirits of Bunbury and Brownlow North—of Alken and of Cruikshank! why were ye not hovering over us to witness our turn-out?—what would not your admirable pencils have made out of the whole scene? What would I not have given to transport the whole concern to Hyde Park on a fine afternoon? Verily, such a show would have made the fortune of its owner; it would have brought more crowds to see it than the bonassus or the cameleopard; and I declare, I myself would have stood the ridicule willingly, for the fun of the thing, to have heard the remarks that would have issued from the flippant lips of

some smart postboy of Newman's, or from the mouth of some grave aristocratic well be-wigged London coachman.

By dint of whip and tongue, however, we got on to the next stage, where we changed for animals scarcely better — but even they dragged us on to the termination of our journey, and it was with indescribable satisfaction that I saw the height of Belgrade, and the hills of Servia, gradually rising on our view, until at last, about four o'clock, we entered the town of Semlin, and terminated this part of our journey at the hotel of the "Golden Lion."

I had now had a trial of posting through several countries of Europe. I had dashed along the splendid roads of England, with the infallible and uninterrupted speed peculiar to itself alone. I had experienced the noisy, flashy "*pretentionne*," but slow and inefficient regime of France. I had jolted along the straight, tedious, spring-breaking chaussées of Belgium; been comforted and solaced by the good roads and regulations of respectable Prussia; had groaned over and cursed the abominable highways of Bavaria, with its sulky sullen boors, and had been again relieved by the slow but sure progress of the imperturbable but civil Austrians. I had now, thank Heaven, terminated my dealings with the proud, self-sufficient Hungarians, with their rat-like horses and devious steppes: why should I declare to which the preference is due? This, however, I will say, that if the posting throughout Prussia be equal to what I found it, and that the other countries can

boast of no better than I experienced, I should at once pronounce it superior to any on the continent of Europe, so far as is consistent with my knowledge. With regard to the posting in Hungary, for the credit of the country, no doubt the less said about it the better; but I should be very apt to advise all travellers, whose business requires speed, to put their dignity and their love of comfort in their pocket, to take a char-a-banc like those used by the natives, with a tilt or cloth cover to keep off rain or wind, to wrap themselves up in furs, and to take their chance of tumbles. They will thus get on faster and at less expense, and be far less liable to the danger of serious accidents and the consequent delay which they must incur by the use of a more comfortable vehicle. As to the country of Hungary, I can be but little qualified to talk of it, from the limited portion which I saw, and the disadvantageous circumstances under which our journey was made; but so far as my observation went, I know none less interesting to travel in. The face of the country is flat, bare, tiresome: there are no antiquities, so far as I know, to engage the attention of the curious; no natural beauties to attract the lover of picturesque scenery; while the accommodations are not assuredly such as to compensate to any class of travellers for the discomforts they must lay their account with enduring, from want of roads or the conveniences of posting. Even to the philosopher, who seeks to study mankind in the book of various regions, Hungary presents but a melancholy page. The people, indeed, are rather a fine race, and, under a proper system of

education, for they are as yet scarcely civilized, might become capable of anything; they might prove fit inhabitants of a land, the soil of which may be pronounced inferior to none in point of productiveness, and the natural advantages of which would seem to point it out as the suitable abode of a great nation. But it is to be feared that the day of such improvement is yet far off, and that not till Europe, and Germany in particular, shall have shaken off the thraldom of government under which she now labours, and have adopted a more enlightened system of policy, will Hungary be in a state to avail herself of her natural advantages, or her people be able to shake off their prejudices and their ignorance, to become active and industrious, and thus to take their due rank in the scale of European nations.

Of Semlin I can say scarcely anything: I entered it but an hour before dusk, and left it the next day at noon, by a path which led direct to the river-side, where a boat was in waiting. It is situated at the confluence of the Danube and the Saavah, and seems to have placed itself there as a sort of spy upon the frowning fortress of Belgrad, whose grey walls are scarcely a mile distant. It is the quarantine station for all who come into Austria from Turkey; and is, moreover, the centre of a very strict line of observation, on the frontiers of Sclavonia, to prevent smuggling, as well as all other communication between the dominions of Austria and Turkey. In Sclavonia, upon this line, every man is a soldier, every village a military colony, commanded by an officer of suitable rank: you see

the number of the company or battalion written up at the entrance of all of them; and the whole of the inhabitants are, I am told, under strict military government. Each man in turn serves for a year on this preventive service, for which, I was informed, he receives payment in some grant of land. It is strange enough, that, notwithstanding all this show of strictness, the smuggling trade not only goes on to a very great extent, but, as I was assured, *with* the knowledge and connivance of the Austrian government, who are sensible of the benefits it produces. If this be true, it forms a beautiful satire upon the wisdom of their system of commercial legislation, and as fine an illustration of the incalculable benefits of free trade as the most sanguine political economist could desire. Adieu! We must now quit the Christian world: my next will introduce you to the land of "Panymrie."

Ever your's.

LETTER III.

Semlin and Belgrad contrasted. — The Tatar-Aga. — A Tatar. — Turkish Posters. — Mistakes of Griffins, and consequences. — The Start. — Turkish Posting. — First Post-house, and Meal. —Night March. — Servian Scenery. — Shepherd's Pipe. — Difficulties of Communication. — Travelling Reflections. — A Halting-place. — A Breakfast. — Valley of the Morâva. — Nissa. — The Balcan. — New Year's Day. — A stormy Night. — Lose our way. —Sofia. — A Gallop. — A Catastrophe. — Ihtuman.— Tatar-bazarchick. — Philipopoli. — Eskew. — Cities of the Silent. — Hermanloo. — A Russian Courier. — Adrianople. — Bourgos. — Sillivria. — Reach Constantinople, and Therapia.

DEAR ——

I HOPE you are prepared for rough work, hard riding, and short commons; such at least was my lot in the scamper I am about to describe; and if you do not participate a little in my weariness and annoyances before we have done, it must be from some defect in my powers of narration, for I promise you I do not mean to spare you.

I mentioned in my last, that Semlin is the Austrian quarantine station; and there were at this very time two of my countrymen in one of the lazarettos, whom I should willingly have gone to see, but I was bound to lose no time; a message had been sent to the dragoman or interpreter to have all prepared for my departure; information had arrived that he was in attendance on the other side

before all my necessary arrangements were completed, so that I was obliged to hasten off about noon, without having a moment to spare. A very obliging Austrian gentleman, Mr. Steinous,* and a British cabinet courier, who was then at Semlin, accompanied me from the inn to the boat, which was to bear me from the last of my own country or faith I should for some time see. There was something solemn in the ceremony of departure, for once gone there was no returning; it was like quitting the living for the dead; and as I shook hands with my two last friends, and got into the coarse punt-like boat, I could not help thinking of old Charon and the river Styx.

About half-an-hour's row wafted us across the reach of the placid river to the landing-place above the fortress of Belgrad. It was a warm, smiling day—all nature looked gay and pleased; even the grim decaying walls of the old bulwark of Mahometanism seemed less forbidding as they lay partially bathed in the radiance of the noontide sun. Yet the lovers of contrast — and contrast, they say, is half the soul of interest — would, I am inclined to think, have found enough to arrest their attention in the change of scene which occurred between the two banks of the river and the two towns which regarded each other across its stream. On the side we had left stood the spruce new town of

* This gentleman, who is in the post-office department, and connected with that in the quarantine, where letters and despatches are fumigated, is exceedingly obliging to strangers, and has always been most useful to English travellers passing through Semlin.

Semlin, with its white buildings and steeples, its pallisades and lazarettos, its custom-houses and preventive system, its numerous and business-like military, with the air and bustle of Europe, like a smart young Count just come to his estate, with his new-fangled ways and notions, and modern garb. On that we had reached lay the ancient fortress of Belgrad, its dark yet grizzled bastions frowning over the stream that had reflected them for ages; its lofty head encircled with crumbling walls like a shattered crown, and looking like the ghost of some departed worthy, revisiting the scene of his former deeds; it was the old decayed Baron, struggling in the ruin of his fortunes to maintain some remains of his former state and grim dignity.

Nor was the contrast less remarkable on entering the town. Even at Semlin, indeed, we had exchanged somewhat of the sober plainness of European costume for a tone of greater richness and variety; and the Sclavonians, the Croatians, and Greeks, mingled the gayer colours of their more fanciful dresses with the grey uniforms of the Austrian military, and the darker dresses of the civilians; but here we found ourselves at once transported into the full blaze of Asiatic splendour, so far, at least, as dress and arms was concerned; for God knows, it went not either to cleanliness or prosperity, as a dirtier, meaner, more ruinous concern, in the shape of town and bazar, than those of Belgrad I have seldom seen: but there were the Servian military in their gorgeous habiliments and arms, "all gleaming in *crimson* and gold," parading the streets and clustering about the palace of their duke;

and there were Albanians in their well-known capotes and embroidered jackets and greaves; and there were the Turks themselves, be-furred and be-robed, with their splendid yataghans and pistol-stocks, far protruding from the silken shawl of many colours that girded their waists. There were the Tatars, with their singular petticoats, of whom more by and bye,—and the new troops, in their poor-looking Europeanized uniforms, and many other castes and classes, of which I knew nothing, and which only added to the gay confusion: but every one mounted the fez, or red cap, with a blue tassel at top, the distinguishing mark of all who acknowledge the Sultan's rule. Yet with all this pomp and variety, there was a striking want of movement and spirit in the whole scene. The same amount of materials in any other country would have formed a picture of glittering animation dazzling to the senses; but here all was still and quiescent, no one moved that could avoid it, and those who were forced into motion performed their task with a grave composure, which, no doubt, suited their notions of dignity, and their solemnity of countenance, but which provoked the beholder accustomed to European stir and bustle. The Greeks alone, the busy gain-seeking Greeks, were active and employed; there was life and motion enough in their looks, and well did they take care to let you know that they possessed both when you entered their shops: but you will say I have become infected myself with Turkish tediousness and dullness, so, dismissing contrasts and speculations, let us come to plain narrative.

At the landing-place we were received by the Dragoman, who, with some of his people, kept at a distance, and saluted us, but approached not. When the requisite preliminaries had been arranged, the boatmen put my things on shore, upon a great slab of stone that lay near. I paid them their fare, was asked whether anything remained, — whether all was "right," — and upon my replying in the affirmative, they retired to their boat. The interpreter came forward, — I approached him; he held out his hand, — I grasped it: "Now," said he, "you have done with the other side; you are one of us; there is no return yonder." It was breaking the last slender link that united me to the habits and people of Europe, and I almost felt the mysterious sort of spell which separated us. "Your first business," said the Dragoman, "is to go to the Tatar-Aga, and prepare to start: all is ready." "Allons," said I: "but there are some things I have to purchase here." "Well," said he, "you may get these as we go through the Bazar, or, what is better, you can get them brought to the Tatar-Aga's house." Whatever may have been the advantages of this arrangement as regarded me, there is no doubt it was highly convenient for the Dragoman and Tatar-Aga, who perfectly understood each other, and were as perfectly ready and qualified to make the most of stranger *griffins*. The Tatar-Aga was a little elderly man, with much more of liveliness and alertness than one is accustomed to see in one Turk out of a hundred. He received me, however, with no small gravity, ordered coffee and pipes, elevated his eye-

brows a little when he found I did not smoke, and taking his own chibook, drew several long and zealous puffs before entering on business. I believe he then inquired whether I was ready to start, when on hearing that I wanted several things, he sent his own people out to procure them for me as I named them. The principal articles required were, a pair of Tatar *shulwars*, or riding trousers, Tatar stockings and boots, a shawl, and some more trifling things for the comfort of the journey; and very speedily were they produced. Indeed, the first was at no greater distance than on a shelf over the worthy Aga's head, from which he produced two garments for enveloping the lower man, both of most formidable and ample dimensions, and neither of them in the first gloss of youth: one of them I appropriated forthwith, paying down not above twice its value when new, and though most inconveniently extensive for walking in, and most unmanageable in mounting and dismounting to any but a Tatar, I found it the most effectual protection against cold I could have procured. Of the Tatar stockings I may say the same; and for the boots, they are certainly well calculated to admit of defence against the weather, for even after induing your feet with three pair of stout stockings, you may, when you reach your stage kick them off, or jump into them again at pleasure. As to the shulwars there may be differences of opinion, and I am inclined from experience to think the Persian riding overalls, or at least, something less extravagant and more manageable than the Tatar inexpressibles, may answer all purposes of the traveller better.

The excitement of gain seemed to rouse the old Tatar-Aga to more than ordinary exertion. Out of every article purchased he gets his share of profit; and out of the sum paid for horses and food during the journey, a regular and large portion finds its way into his pocket. For instance, I required five horses, which, allowing amply for presents to postmasters and living, should have cost fifteen hundred piastres—I was charged three thousand; of this the balance is the prey of the Tatar-Aga, the Dragoman, and the Pasha. Thus stimulated, the old gentleman (all Tatars are gentlemen) began to evince his zeal and alertness, by acting the part of my valet-de-chambre: his own hands tied the strings of the shulwars and arranged their folds; he insisted on putting on my spurs, and awkwardly enough he acquitted himself; but at buckling on the sword he was more at home, and its water (it was a capital Indian blade) immediately attracted his attention: fain would he have compassed the possession of it, as a gift, if that had been within the bounds of probability; but not being so, he attempted the alternative of purchase. "Would one thousand piastres (about ten pounds sterling) purchase it?" he asked of the interpreter: "No."—"Would twice the sum?" I relieved both myself and him from further importunities, by observing that the sword had been the gift of a friend, and that I could not dispose of it. The Turks are a well-bred people, and the reply prevented further questions on the subject. This admiration of other folks' goods was not confined, however, to the old gentleman. In adjusting my spurs, I had occasion to take out my knife and make

use of it; the moment I laid it down, his son, a young fellow of fifteen or sixteen, seized it, and pointing to himself made use of a most expressive sign, while he pronounced the word *Buksheesh* (a present). I need not add, that this remarkably frank request met with an equally unequivocal refusal.

While occupied in my preparations, the Tatar that was to be my guide and companion on the journey entered the room. It would be difficult to conceive a finer looking fellow; he was the very *beau ideal* of a Turk. Tall and well made, his gorgeous raiment sat well upon him, filling out a figure which without it might possibly have appeared slender for his height. His face, in shape an almost faultless oval, was undisguised by any beard; a pair of exquisitely-formed mustachios shrouded the upper lip of an equally beautiful mouth, furnished with teeth, which, as Sterne says, "sovereignty might have pawned her jewels for." His nose was the perfection of that sort which combines the beauties of the Grecian and Roman, and his eyes, in themselves full, dark and sleepy, yet easily awaking into piercingness, were scarcely blemished by a slight cast in one of them, which imparted, when he smiled, and smile he did most fascinatingly, an air of satirical archness that was not belied by his temper: for, though perfectly good-humoured, it was easy to see that he not only possessed but indulged a vein of humour somewhat foreign to the usual gravity of a Turk; but I have had since cause to know that *Turks* and *Tatars* are often very different beings,

and that the latter, at least, can enjoy their laugh, as well as the other good things of this nether world, with as much relish as a Christian. It was indeed a pleasure to look upon Mehemet-Aga, so was this Tatar named, and well did his really noble looking person set off the rich dress of his order. The dress of a Tatar, besides the drawers and shirt and vest which all wear, consists, first, of a jooba, or vest with long skirts, the upper part of which sits tight to the shape, while the latter reaches down to near the heels in those petticoat-like folds of which I have above spoken; this part of the dress is always richly embroidered with silk in some different colour, particularly round the skirts. Around his waist, above this, he binds, first, some simple girdle, and then a long and very handsome silken shawl of various brilliant colours; over this, in front, is bound a broad leather belt, in which, and in the shawl, are stuck the huge pair of silver-knobbed pistols and yataghan with hilt of the same metal or of ivory curiously carved. By a thong or belt across his shoulder is suspended his despatch-box, of leather or velvet embroidered with silver. A rich jacket, called a kiurk, of handsome stuff, either scarlet cloth or sometimes velvet, laced and embroidered with gold, and lined with some species of fur, more or less valuable according to the owner's means, is worn over these; and, in case of cold or rainy weather, the whole person is enveloped in various sorts of cloaks, of which the common Janizary's jooba is perhaps the best, as it is the most generally used. The enormous shulwars which I have just described are

common to most Turks, but Tatars always use them. They, in fact, consist of a petticoat of most prodigious dimensions with the bottom sewed up, leaving two holes for the legs to go through. They are fastened round the waist by a running cord, and, being pulled up to the knee, where they are tied, are suffered to fall down almost to the ground, in the manner I have above alluded to; so that a person unaccustomed to them is forced to hold up the slack of them as he walks. It is a curious thing to see the manner in which a Tatar as he mounts stows away the multitude of his breeches before him; nor is it less curious to see the fashion in which he cords and bandages up his legs and feet to keep them from the cold, before he draws over all his huge and handsome embroidered stockings, which fall down with much stage effect over the front of his wide Turkish boots: but I dare say you are already weary of this minute description of the Tatar's wardrobe, so I will only further tell you that my friend Mehemet mounted upon his lofty head the universal scarlet fez, or red cap with flat top, around which he wound one yellow and one blue handkerchief, and that thus attired he looked, as I have told you, one of the handsomest Turks, or men, I had ever seen.

While, with the assistance of the worthy Tatar-Aga, I was occupied in rigging my outward man according to the fashion I have mentioned, the myrmidons of the stable were not less industriously employed in caparisoning the steeds that were to bear the party on its first stage. In this there is always

some delay; the loads have to be adjusted, the traveller's riding geer to be fitted to the little animal he is to bestride, and a variety of petty matters which all find their places in the sequel, are adrift and in the way: but every one knows the plagues of a first start—it is the same whether in your own carriage or on Tatar horses. At length out they came, a beautiful show—little, shaggy, galled and broken-kneed, it was a burning shame, you would have said, for any man to impose upon their miserable backs the burden of his own carcass, but Soorajees have no compunction; besides, they know their beasts, and strangers do not: no doubt the nags, like the eels, have got so accustomed to the work that they like it.

I advise every man, however, to take personal cognizance of the adjustment of his own riding apparatus, at all events for the first few stages; for, as Turkish grooms are not altogether accustomed to English saddlery, he may find the various appliances of his equestrian outfit turned to strange purposes. There is a mighty deal, so far as comfort is concerned on a journey, in learning to make your carriage or your horse your *house* for the time, and so placing the various articles you require, as to be easily got at without deranging yourself in your seat. A little contrivance at first will save not only time but many things that would otherwise be lost by want of arrangement, and which are invaluable because not to be replaced. I was not yet up to all this, and therefore, though no small degree of ingenuity had been lavished upon my riding equip-

ment, it appeared in the sequel that many of my conveniences proved most *in*convenient, while several others of very easy contrivance had been totally omitted. *Griffins*, to use a well-known Indian synonyme for the elegant English expression "Greenhorn," sometimes make sad mistakes in their outfit on such occasions. I have heard of tight doe-skins and smart new top-boots, and knowing Newmarket cut coats, being selected as the fittest costume for a Tatar journey: only think of the beautiful white *tights* and top-boots among the Servian bogs and mountains, mud knee-deep, and on nags that scarce have height enough to clear the legs of their riders from the porridge in which they wade. I have heard of a certain traveller, a cabinet courier too, though accustomed more to carriage-work than journeys on horseback, who, in spite of all friendly admonitions to the contrary, would start from Semlin in this "Melton Mowbray" sort of turn-out. It was rainy weather, with mud "*galore*," as Paddy would say, and a few stages convinced him of his mistake, for the doe-skins were reduced to the consistence of tripe; and as for the boots, there was no telling their condition, nor that of the legs they encased. To add to his misfortunes, the vicissitudes of cold and heat, wet and dry weather, together with so unwonted a spell of bumping on a rough trotter, produced such an effect upon his nether man, that the dead and living leather formed so intimate a union, that there was no separating them, sorely to the discomfort of the owner. English pluck and bottom, however, carried him through, though to the

serious damage of the *latter*. After a rapid journey he reached Constantinople, and tendered his despatches to the nobleman at that time our representative there: "Pray sit down, Mr. ——," said his polite excellency. "Thank you, my lord," replied the traveller, "but," with an expressive gesture, "*I can't.*" *

I was not quite so green. The Tatar inexpressibles, though cumbrous and unwieldy, proved an admirable defence against cold, while from their looseness they offered no impediment to the circulation,—one of the most painful consequences of long continuance in any attitude; and the boots admitted, as I have said, no less than three pair of stockings. The *tout-ensemble* partook, certainly, more of the strange and grotesque than of the elegant, and you would have half killed yourself with laughing at seeing me, at length, climbing slowly and deliberately into my seat by the help of a couple of Soorajees, and stowing away the interminable quantity of broad cloth that enveloped my lower man. Saddle, shulwars, and cloak, so completely covered the nag, that scarcely any part of him was visible except his ears, tail, and hoofs; but as he did not sink down under his burthen, I thought there might be hopes of his getting on with it, especially after seeing what I had seen in Hungary. The Soorajees sat mounted already, holding the two load-horses by the leading-rope, the head of the last tied to the tail of the first. Last of all, from the

* This reminds one of Mr. Moore's cherubims: "Asseyez-vous, mes enfans."—"Monseigneur, *il n'y a pas de quoi!*"

stepping-stone beside the doorway, up springs the Tatar upon his castle-like saddle, with a "Yah ullah!" and a bound that shakes his little steed to the very marrow, and clearing and settling with one knowing tug his ample petticoats, he sits rock-fast on his seat like a piece of the animal he bestrides. "*Oor oollah, Oor oollah!*" * exclaims the Tatar Aga, leaning from his *Bala khaneh;* "*Oor oollah, oor oollah!*" shout the other Tatars, who always muster at the house of their chief on such occasions;—"*Oor oollah!*" roar the Soorajees and bystanders in concert; "*Oor oollah!*" respond the Tatar and his Soorajee; and away we go dashing through the thick mud and mire, and clattering along the half-paved street which is honoured by the residence of that respectable functionary the Tatar Aga. But before we proceed further, it will be as well to explain to you a little more of the nature and system of Turkish posting.

The posting establishment of Turkey consists of a series of posts, placed at various distances apart from each other, that is, from three to sixteen hours each stage, extending along most of the great lines of road throughout this once powerful empire. In these posts, horses were kept, originally, for the use of government alone; that is, for couriers or persons travelling on the business of government. In time, however, the exclusive system was relaxed, so as to suit the convenience of such travellers as had interest to obtain orders from the local governments, or as

* "Good luck to you! may you be fortunate!"—the common Turkish salutation at starting or meeting on a journey.

were content to pay an established rate of posting. At present, I believe, the arrangement is to allow the postmaster a certain fixed sum from the public treasury, in consideration of which he is required to keep in constant readiness a proportionable number of horses, and these are furnished to all government couriers free of charge, but to other travellers at the rate of one piastre per Turkish hour of road for each horse. Now, as these hours, often quite of an arbitrary length, may at the least be taken at three and a half to four miles English, and as a piastre, whatever may have been its original value, has now dwindled down to twopence halfpenny English, no one can call this mode of travelling expensive. But then, it is true, you have a good many horses to pay for. Thus, suppose your baggage will make up two loads, you require, besides, a horse for yourself, and others for the Tatar and Soorajee or guide respectively—five in all; so that with your two loads of baggage you ought to travel at the rate of a shilling per hour or about threepence English money per mile of road for your horses. You have already seen, however, that advantage is taken of strangers, and that I, among others, paid nearly double the regular rate; but this only happens when, from ignorance of the country and its habits, you are content, in order to save trouble, to pay the Tatar an exorbitant sum.

The accommodations afforded by these post-houses beyond the means of progress are small and wretched enough. Sometimes they consist merely of a large shed, serving for the stable and as a domicile for

the Soorajees or grooms; but when situated in a town or village, they are generally attached to the house of the postmaster, and include something like a coffee-room apart from the stable. This coffee-room is an apartment with raised platforms of wood, on which the traveller may sit, or lie down and sleep, at pleasure; and, though most commonly found occupied by sleepers and smokers of all ranks and descriptions, the Tatar never fails to procure a berth for his charge. In these receptacles there is always a *Cahwajee*, or maker of coffee, and waiter, who is the servant of the customers and travellers, and who gives you immediately as you dismount a little cup of coffee,—genuine Turkish coffee, strong, bitter, free of all contamination from either milk or sugar, and thickened with its own grounds to the consistence of moderate cream. You may have sugar, it is true, if you like it, and you may let the grounds subside; but the Turks like it plain and thick. Perhaps you would like to know how this famous Turkish coffee is made: it is thus:

On the fire of charcoal, in the fireplace, there is, you must know, a vessel of water always kept near the boil: and the curious observer may be struck with the appearance of a range of little pans, or skillets, somewhere about the fireplace, varying in size from that of an egg to that of a pint-measure. Taking one of these, according to the number of cups required, the Cahwajee puts into it, of coffee pounded as fine as dust, at the rate of one small spoonful, of the size of an egg-spoon, for each; pours in the warm water, and puts the skillet on

or close to the embers. In a moment almost it comes a-boil, and that moment he takes it off, strikes the edge of the bottom against the fireplace, puts it on again, and repeats the operation thrice in all. The coffee is then made, and the whole process takes scarce a minute. It is never permitted to do more than come a-boil, and this only thrice. It is then poured out into little cups, not holding more than a very small egg-ful, and is sipped so scalding hot that few European tongues or palates can stand it. The cups are then returned to the Cahwajee, who rinses them in water. But let it not be supposed that so much good stuff is thrown away: these rinsings are carefully preserved in another metal vessel, and kept also warm for use; the liquor is called coffee-*sherbet*, having just the flavour of weak coffee, and is either drunk pure by the natives, or is used with other water to make fresh coffee. I believe a practice somewhat analogous to this exists in some of the London coffee-houses of great resort, where a certain quantity of fresh coffee is put into the kettle or boiler upon the grounds of the preceding brewst.

To return to the Ganymede of this restorative beverage: he is also the man who pulls off your boots, furnishes you with water to drink or to wash in; prepares your mess of food, whatever that may consist of, whether eggs fried in fat, or a foully surprised fowl, or any other of those admirable *plats* which rejoice the palates and comfort the stomachs of travellers in a Turkish post-house. If you should aspire to the luxury of a pillaw, it is generally pre-

pared within the precincts of the postmaster's harem: but for this few persons travelling Tatar can afford time to wait. In lieu of a Cahwajee, where no such functionary exists, these and similar offices are performed by one of the Soorajees; and though such a substitution may be thought rather questionable in point of *propreté*, the difference in reality is by no means so great as might be imagined; for these Cahwajees are, for the most part, either broken-down Soorajees, or young aspirants to that noble office: assuredly, so far as cleanliness is concerned, there is not a pin to choose between the professors of either.

When the traveller starts from one of these post-houses, his Soorajee, who acts as guide as well as horse-keeper, takes the lead, holding in his right hand the halter of the foremost baggage-horse, the others being tied head and tail; but as five horses are reckoned a sufficient charge for any one guide, if the party requires a greater number, two are furnished. The Tatar, in correctness, ought to be the last of his party, that he may see whether anything goes wrong or is dropped on the road; but as the load-horses very frequently exhibit an indisposition to move at a pace consistent with his ideas of speed, he generally takes up a position with his long heavy whip within point-blank distance of the quarter of the laziest or weakest horse—for he seldom discriminates on that point very nicely—and from this commanding post keeps up a running fire of tremendous blows, which soon convinces the recusants of the absolute necessity of rapid motion. On leaving every village, the Soorajee usually sets up a sort of

song,—some would call it a howl,—it certainly approaches to a continuous Holla! which ends in one never-varying chorus of "*A măn, a māun—a măn, a māun!*" roared out at first, and then dying away into a kind of melancholy wail. This ditty is sometimes echoed by the Tatar; who, if he conceives himself to be gifted with a good voice (as was the case with my worthy Mehemet Aga), takes the first part himself, and thunders out a succession of such terrific sounds, enunciated with grimaces so hideous, that you at first imagine he must be enacting the part of the buffoon, if indeed he have not got the colic; but no—his gravity is so imperturbable, you think you must be mistaken, and that some heroic import in the lay must be the cause of so much solemn yet grotesque energy. You are wrong again: inquire, and you will find that it is only some uncouth recitative concerning the state of the road, the qualities of the horses, or something or other connected with the journey. But, be the strain what it will, grave or gay, it is always accompanied by a running bass of blows upon the carcasses of the load-horses, not forgetting his own and those of the Soorajees.

In my own case, we started about half-past three in the afternoon, spattering and clattering through the dirty street and ruined gateway, across the once formidable but now dry and shallow ditch of Belgrad. No time had I to view the lines of the celebrated Prince Eugene, who besieged this fortress in 1716, and which are still, they say, to be traced: away we trotted through the open country beyond,

but soon got among rising grounds, covered with dwarf oak and other coppice-wood, which by nightfall had increased to a forest of small-sized trees. The road, which at first was tolerable, became both deep and miry on leaving the open country; so that the trot, which had hitherto carried us on at a rate of five or six miles an hour, was reduced to a far more deliberate pace. As we rose among the hills and approached the first mountainous range of Servia, we found the snow, which, seen from a distance, appeared only to powder them, deep enough to render the road extremely sloppy. The pools and mud were covered with ice, which gave way under the horses' feet to their no small discomfort, and the cold increased considerably, though not to any painful degree: a more lovely night overhead and a finer frosty moon I never saw.

Four hours brought us to the end of our first stage. From the post-house, a huge shed, which loomed larger in the moonlight, rushed forth a host of Soorajees at the shouting of their brother: one seizes the reins of the Tatar's horse, while two more, holding his stirrup and placing their hands under his arms, assist him to alight. With a lordly air he motions them to attend the gentleman, who, at the "*Ein, ein, tchelebee*" ("Alight, sir,") of his leader, dismounts, and casts a curious and somewhat suspicious glance at the *hospitium* which he is invited to enter. During the minute which elapsed in this scrutiny and other matters, the Tatar, who generally thinks he has done enough in seeing you safe at the post, disappeared with the Soorajees into

the shed. Following them into its dark penetralia, I found myself incontinently among a number of moving objects, which, after groping about for a while, and my eyes becoming more accustomed to the obscurity, I discovered to be quadrupeds: luckily, the conviction was not forced upon me by a kick, or rather a tramp on the toes *en passant;* for your Turkish poster is seldom a very lively animal, and never lifts its foot if it can help it, except in case of actual assault. On I fared; and on getting from under the lee of the horses, descried, afar off, a red glare, proceeding from a fire, surrounded by moving figures. Winning my way to this beacon-light, after sundry trips and stumbles over loads, and saddles, and stable-gear, I brought up beside a monstrous log of oak burning fiercely on the earthen floor: already had part of it been consumed, and the world of embers threw out heat enough to roast an ox; while the glare of the portion still in process of combustion was scarcely less trying to the eyes than the acrid smoke which eddied round, after in vain attempting to escape through the roof.

Little, however, did those who basked around this furnace seem to care for such inconveniences; on the contrary, they obviously enjoyed both the light and heat it threw abroad. The rich and various dress of those who thus reposed, and the glitter of arms in the red rays as they lazily rose from their reclining posture to extract from the embers a coal to light their long chibooks, denoted them to be Turks: the moving figures in less seemly garb were the

Soorajees and menials. The Tatar was already seated, and in the act of receiving from a most disreputable-looking personage a cup of coffee, which, however, he had the grace to hand to me. A low and lame three-legged stool was then presented to me as a piece of attention; but after experiencing three tumbles in attempting to put it to the right use, I adopted the safer expedient of taking a corner of a certain coarse rug which was interposed between the seats of honour of my new companions and the dung which formed the floor of this elegant refectory. The "*Khoosh gueldiniz! Khoosh gueldiniz! Seffa gueldiniz!*"* was enunciated by several of the party,—probably retainers of the post-masters,—and followed up by some further Turkish sentences, all courteous, no doubt, but little understood at the time, with the tender of a chibook, which of course was declined by me, who, you know, never smoke; and after this exertion of hospitality, the conversation became confined to the occasional interchange of a short question and reply between the Tatar and the Soorajees.

After a little while thus passed, the Tatar, turning to me with a patronizing and benevolent air, exclaimed, in an interrogative tone, "*Mangea, tchelebee? mangea?*" which being interpreted, signifies, "Will you eat, sir? will you eat?" A prompt reply in the affirmative produced an equally prompt demonstration on the Tatar's part, who, calling for his *eibehs*, or saddle-bags, proceeded to extract therefrom sundry bundles tied up in handkerchiefs of various sorts and hues; another made its appear-

* "Welcome! welcome!"

ance from that capacious receptacle, the bosom of his jacket. I believe he could stow away half the stock-in-trade of a country grocer in the unfathomed recesses of that strange repository; it is as unlimited in capacity as the *shulwars* of a Persian or the wallet of a beggar, or even as the pocket of a certain excellent old lady of whom you and I wot. The former bundles he quickly undid, exposing the contents, which made their appearance in the shape of sundry dark substances, cut, as it seemed, into morsels fit for the mouth. What became of the latter I did not at the moment remark.

"*Bismillah!*" ejaculated the Tatar, clutching a fistful of the dark-looking knobs, and placing them on a sort of wooden tray before me; proceeding, at the same time, to pop some, one by one, into his own mouth. I own that, hungry as I was, the view of these strange viands, and the filthy wrappers which had contained them, was by no means calculated to allay a certain feeling of disgust that had arisen from contemplating this process, and it was with some hesitation that I lifted one of the cold moist morsels to my mouth. But the smell excited the latent appetite; and, assuredly, the taste did not tend to diminish the salutary effect: one morsel followed another, and each various mess was tasted, until the gnawing of hunger began to subside, and I was forced to acknowledge that the cold *dolmehs* and *pâtisserie* of Mehemet Aga were no bad things after a fifteen miles' ride in a sharp night, whatever might be their appearance or the mode of serving them up.

It was in a pause of this pleasant pastime that, on looking around me, I became aware of the cause of a certain strange fizzling and bristling sound which had for some little time made itself heard from one part of the red embers. I now observed some of the Soorajees engaged in watching certain opake substances that were spitting and sputtering, like a roasting apple, among the glowing ashes; but little did I imagine that we were in any shape interested in the process that was going on. After a few moments, one of the operators made a snatch, with a paw that seemed absolutely fire-proof, at one of the mysterious masses, which he dragged to the side and deposited on the white ashes; then drawing a knife from his girdle, he inflicted on it several gashes. I declare that a bit of a cold shiver crept through my veins as the growing suspicion of my mind was confirmed — it was certainly flesh! — "Mighty powers!" thought I, "can this be intended for us to eat?" The doubt was soon solved; for the Soorajee, with an air of triumph, like a man who has done his duty well, laid the hissing mass before the Tatar, who instantly proceeded to examine it. But that important personage having pointed out that in many places it was still blood-raw, it was once more committed to the fiery ordeal. At length, this primitive steak being done to the mind of our epicurean Tatar, he seized it hissing hot, and held it firm, while the Soorajees, with knife and claw, tore it into gobbets of from one to two inches square, which were thrown down, smoking and steaming, upon one of the handkerchiefs before me. This meat had

formed the contents of the bundle which the Tatar had taken from his bosom, and he had deposited it there in order that the warmth of his body might prevent it from being destroyed by the frost, as would have been the case had he committed it to his saddle-bags with the rest. But of the *kebaubs* thus daintily dressed I felt little disposition to taste. My appetite, blunted by the really good things already produced, was not much whetted by such an effort of Soorajeean cookery; so the Tatar, sweeping the whole into a handkerchief for future use, deposited it in his eibehs, which were forthwith delivered to the new Soorajee. "*Haidee, haidee,** *tchelebee!*" exclaims he, rising, and again mounting a fresh set of posting-nags, and with the same chorus of "Oor-oollahs!" at parting, off we clattered a little after eight o'clock at night upon a ten-mile stage.

Our way now led through deep forests of oak skirting the Danube, which sometimes might be seen glimmering through them on the left. The road was as bad as possible, a mere muddy track over hill and dale, covered partially with half-melted snow, and we soon bore the signs of it upon our persons, which were soaked and caked with mud from the splashing of the animal's heels, as we occasionally tried to urge them into a trot. Numbers of trees of an immense size lay cut and stripped of their branches along the road-side: many of these would, I am persuaded, have measured from five to six feet in diameter. The moon shone bright, and

* Haidee, or rather Haidyee, is a Turkish interjection, equivalent to the French "Allons!"

the weather continued fine; yet it was cold and weary work, whipping on our jaded horses during the live-long night, stopping only once to get a cup of coffee; for it was six in the morning of the 29th of December before we reached our stage.

The scenery this morning resembled that of the previous night: but we commenced the stage with a singular bit of road. It was built across a swamp for several miles, and formed by a sort of double framework of oak posts and beams, wattled with strong oak boughs, the space between of from twelve to sixteen feet wide being filled with earth from two ditches, one on each side. The mound thus raised some six or eight feet above the level of the ground was in some places mettled with great stones, which rather added to the difficulty of progress than tended in any way to facilitate the traveller's way. The mountains as well as the valleys through which we wound were of a remarkably earthy character, totally deficient in that sharpness and abruptness which gives vigour and interest to the landscape; and even the more distant and lofty ranges which might sometimes be observed through openings on either hand were equally tame, and all wooded to the top: no rock at all was visible, and one was apt to wonder from whence the stones that were plaguing him under foot could have been brought. The wood was almost all oak, and of that species, with small deeply-indented leaves, which we call the "Turkey oak." Among the underwood I remarked the hawthorn; but we passed too rapidly along to identify the various sorts that might exist in the

forest, in their present leafless condition. Throughout the whole of this day multitudes of those noble trees I have before alluded to were seen felled, lying on the road-side ready, as it might seem, to be transported away for use: I imagined that they must be intended for ship-building, and would probably be carried to the Danube; but subsequently I heard, with what correctness I know not, that they had been cut down on purpose to construct a road through these forests that might be passable at all seasons, and facilitate the transit of goods and produce through this part of the country.

The villages which met our eyes, and very few they were, appeared wretched in the extreme—mere sheds of wood, or "wattle and dab," thatched with grass.* About eleven in the forenoon we breakfasted in one of these situated in a fine valley. Indeed, a finer country for the operations of an industrious and peaceably-disposed people can scarcely be imagined;—every foot of the soil as fat as the richest parts of Hungary, with the advantage of illimitable command of wood for fuel and all other purposes. Beautiful valleys that may all have once been cultivated, but which are now again overrun with a thick growth of young dwarf oak, seem to invite again the hand of the agriculturist; and a prettier, more varied scene of hill and wood, and pasture, than some of these Servian valleys exhibit, need not

* I must say, that on returning by this road at a finer season things wore a very different and much more gratifying aspect: things look very *triste* in the depth of winter—and to a traveller fresh from smiling Europe too!

be sought for in any country,—but all was still and deserted. The villages that exist are in general so shrouded in the deep forests as not to be seen: not a smoke could I perceive curling upwards in the calm morning air; not a human being showed himself, except some travellers or carriers of goods whom we met occasionally in the road,—or a solitary shepherd, standing fixed like one of the old oak-stumps around him, watching a small flock of sheep and goats.

It was in one of these sweet secluded valleys, as we wound along the foot of a slope from which the sun had melted the snow, that my ear was struck by the sound of a pipe; and sweeter notes assuredly I never heard. It was a single strain, with a soft melancholy cadence frequently repeated; and whether it arose from the time and place, the perfect stillness all around, or the thoughts within me, I cannot express the delight which it gave me. I thought of the "Vision of Mirza," and half expected to see some shepherd genius sitting on the bank above me, pouring out his thrilling strains. But no one appeared: even the Servian boor who had caused the sensation, and who probably was unconscious of the exquisite beauty of his own melody, was not to be seen; but the stragglers of his flock, as they crossed the road, or looked down from the bank above us, gave token that he was not far off.

As the day advanced, the sky began to lour and clouds to gather after a fashion that threatened a bad night. By this time, although not actually fatigued, I yet began to experience some of the in-

conveniences of hard travelling, which made themselves perceptible in the shape of a bad headach, and to which a wet jacket promised no great relief. Nor was much assistance to be expected from communication with my companion; for, in spite of the intelligent eyes, lofty brow, and arch expression of Mehemet Aga, I found him, like most of his countrymen, and quite the reverse of the inhabitants of Persia, remarkably slow at comprehending my meaning, however significant the gestures by which, in aid to the few words of Turkish I possessed, I sought to express it. Thus, it became very difficult not only to acquire such information as I desired to obtain, but even to make known my wants. So early as the first stage, my friend Mehemet had volunteered an attempt at conversation; but though this was sustained on my part with all the knowledge and ability of which I was master, and on his with an energy of voice and gesture increasing in proportion to the evidences of non-comprehension in my countenance, it soon came to an end; the Tatar, after a slight expression of despair, relapsing into silence, or consoling himself with a burst of most uncouth and energetic song.

There are so many Persian and Arabic words adopted into the Osmanlee Turkish, that I hoped to turn my knowledge of the former to account, and, with a little practice, to make myself understood on common subjects; but I found both the pronunciation and the acceptation of these words to vary so much from that which they bore in the original tongue, that my acquaintance with them proved of

little use. Mehemet, on the other hand, was quite as unable to meet me half-way in any language. He knew no French; indeed, his whole stock of foreign lore consisted in some half-dozen words of bad Italian — as *bono, non bono, mezzo, altero, giorno, parler, mangiar, dormir*, &c. &c., which were forced to perform a very loose and multifarious sort of duty. *Parler*, for instance, was made use of on all occasions connected with speaking or narrating. *Mangiar*, signifying to eat, in Mehemet's vocabulary, has, I believe, been in some sort adopted as a Turkish word. *Dormir* told its own tale. But all these words were made use of with the most heroic contempt of all grammatical rule, or approach to declension or conjugation, the difference of application being indicated entirely by accentuation: for instance, "*mangiar?*" in the interrogative tone signified "will you eat?" "*bono?*" "is it good?" "*bono*," without the interrogative, "it is good," &c. &c. You will therefore easily conceive how fruitless were all attempts at interchange of ideas, and how seldom, consequently, after a few trials, we resorted to so laborious and unsatisfactory a sort of pastime.

During the whole of this day our way lay chiefly through forests, traversed by roads knee-deep in mud and water, and so slippery and laborious that we could seldom achieve a trot. In the evening of the 30th, after halting at a small coffee-house to eat a few eggs fried in butter, we took the road again, at the beginning of a night as black and threatening as ever poor traveller set his face to. On leaving

the door of the coffee-house, which was illuminated by a bright fire, we could not see an inch before us any more than if we had been stone-blind; and how the horses, and still more, how the Soorajees could *smell* their way, was to me a mystery. To mend matters, the rain just began to fall from the ink-black clouds above, threatening to give us enough of it before we should be housed again. But there was no help for it; so, unbuckling my "Mackintosh," and casting it over all other wrappings, I gave my horse the reins and trusted to its instinct as, snorting with alarm, it followed the rest up a steep ascent beneath which we heard the roar of a stream. Whether there was a precipice to tumble over or not, I could not tell; but this I know, that it was not without a blank enough sense of forlornness that I quitted the cheerful little post-house to encounter in a stormy night roads scarcely passable in daylight. Neither will you wonder that thoughts of my own pleasant home and of its dear inmates rose upon my mind with something of a pang as I recollected the festive season, and contrasted the present with the past, and remembered me of the gay and joyous faces that used to cluster round the Christmas-fire, or see the new year in with many a hearty wish for "happy returns" of the merry season:—Alas!—But, with a hearty shake to get rid of these ill-timed recollections, and a dig of the spurs into the sides of my poor jade, on we went—"Ugh! how it does pour and blow!—sleet and snow too, I declare! Well—patience!—'joy' they say 'cometh in the morning:'" but the dawn was far—far off, and, wet and

cold and stiff, I came to the resolution, towards two o'clock, to halt for a couple of hours at the next habitation we might reach.

This proved to be a small coffee-house, where, after plumping heavily and wearily into the mud before it from the sorely-galled back of my done-up horse, I reeled towards the glimmer of a few smouldering ashes that were disclosed by the opening door. But to rouse the inmates of this abode at such a time and in such a night was not so easy; and it was not until I had divested myself of my dripping outer garments, and tugged off my well-soaked boots, and thrown my weary frame upon the platform, that the snoring Cahwajee was dragged from his roost by the Tatar, and began to stir up the embers and feed them with fresh fuel into a blaze.

Scarcely had this been effected, than "*Mangiar, tchelebee, mangiar?*" was enunciated by the Tatar in the interrogative accent: but rest—sleep—was all I at the time required, and the pronunciation of the word "*dormir,*" with the addition of "*ekees saat,*" — which being interpreted signifies "two hours," — occasioned the instant production, from a recess, of two bundles of rags which had done duty, as one would have guessed by their condition, for some ages, as a mattress and pillow. They were not very inviting, looking as if they were made up rather of grease and vermin than of cover and stuffing: but weariness is seldom nice, and before this most unlovely couch was well spread upon the bench I was stretched upon the top of it. But scarce a minute

had elapsed before I started from it in some consternation; for, through one half-opened lid, I saw the Cahwajee rake out a shovel-ful or two of glowing charcoal, and, throwing it into a pan of earthenware, bring and place it close to my head. Now, my lungs not being proof against the fumes of charcoal, *alias* carbonic-acid gas, and not being yet aware of the fashion of the country, this proceeding did cause me some alarm, and, in spite of the cold, I motioned the dangerous luxury away, and the Tatar soon relieved me of it by having it placed at his own feet. I was wrong; they knew better than I: but to a stranger it does seem very extraordinary to see the free use made by the Turks of charcoal in this way. They sit over chafing dishes filled with it, inhaling the steam, as might be thought with delight and perfect impunity; but the fact is, that the charcoal has been so far consumed as to emit but little vapour: still, what is emitted must be noxious; and it has often astonished me to see a number of people sitting in little groups each round its pan, in a small room carefully shut up from the external air, and apparently without suffering any bad effect from the fumes that must have been exhaled.

During the troubled sleep which visited me after this alarm, I had a horrible vision—a vision fit to damp the cravings of a cannibal's stomach. There was a bustle and a clucking, screaming noise which attracted my notice; and I saw the Cahwajee with an attendant imp make their appearance, clutching certain struggling creatures, bipeds of the gallinaceous species, doubtless surprised treacherously on

their roost, the heads of which he proceeded to haggle off, regardless of their shrieks, with the most deliberate indifference. By an equally summary process of scorching, they were deprived of their feathers, and the operation was completed by their being thrust, scarcely yet dead, into the fire, where their miserable limbs continued to hiss and squeak, till a profounder fit of sleep made all things fade from my view. But the awful pawing which they underwent from the myrmidons of the stable dwelt in my remembrance, and I shuddered at the presentiment which forced itself upon me that they were destined to become the material of a future meal.

After a space of time, the length of which I only became aware of by seing the grey light streaming in at the oil-paper windows, I was roused by the "*Kôlk, tchelebee, kôlk! haidyee, haidyee!*" ("Up, sir, up! let us be going!") of the Tatar; and, shocked at the delay, up I started, but found myself stiffer by far than when I lay down. So were the poor horses, whose imperfections were more visible in the dawn than when we mounted them in the black darkness, and not in reality decreased by their hard tramp of the preceding night. I could not help giving vent to my apprehensions of their failing to carry us the remainder of the stage: but all remonstrance was vain; the Soorajee pledges his head for the performance of the galled skeletons—and have they not had full four hours' rest, like their riders? So the loads were tied on, we mounted, and away we all went. The frost is hard; the ice

firm on the pools; the frozen mud not much rougher than a newly-macadamized road, or the gravel of a little torrent's bed: so on we dashed! never mind the horses' feet; d—l take the hindmost! Down goes one on his knees—*n'importe!* a scramble, a sprawl; then up again, and away—away! And so the post of Raznah is gained; and once more, heated by the brush, we spring from our smoking jades.

"And now for breakfast!"—and for the realization of my presentiment. Out came the Tatar's bags, and from their fearful depths out were dragged two of the barbacued victims, their unhappy uncomposed limbs staring in every direction from the effects of the fiery ordeal they had undergone; more like lumps of peat or black turf they were, with five sticks stuck into each, than the remains of any creature known in modern ornithology. Out too came the well-known handkerchief with the remains of the scorched beef of the first night's feast, which I devoutly hoped had been devoured by the Soorajees. But hunger is not nice. Reduced to the alternative, I preferred the holocaust; although it was no child's play—tough old grandmothers they must have been, these fowls, the more shame to their murderers! But help was at hand; the stout fingers of the Tatar soon tore granny to pieces, and reduced her carcass to a condition fit for the process of mastication. Mehemet and I did our best; the Soorajees picked her bones; fresh horses were announced; another cup of coffee; and then "*Haidyee, haidyee!*" once more.

The morning was well advanced ere we were again on horseback, scampering away, as fast as mud and mire would permit, on a ten hours' stage, along the fine broad valley of the river Morava, which extends to Nissa. The greater part of this beautiful strath was covered with dwarf oak of the Turkey species, interspersed with patches of pasture, which had probably once been cultivated, but was now again abandoned to be nibbled by sheep, or turned up by the snouts of the swine which form a principal part of the moveable property of the Servians. The mountains, far and near, were covered with oak forests; the day, after the night's rain, was fine, the air fresh and exhilarating, and the landscape altogether spoke of peace and tranquillity; yet one could not but remark the absence of man, the rarity of villages, and the paucity of cultivation. There were here no little towns or spires peeping up from among groves of tall trees, as in Germany: nor did the habitations we occasionally saw wear the comfortable air even of those in Hungary; they were miserable sheds, walled and plastered with mud, and having thatched roofs, breathing an air of great poverty and wretchedness. Sheep, goats, and small swine abounded everywhere. The sheep were chiefly of the broad fat-tailed breed, which do not, I was told, give very fine wool: nevertheless, it finds a foreign market, and I suspect even in England; for I saw huge carts loaded with bales of wool, and many pack-horses charged with the same, all marked, as well as I recollect, G. S., in a very English style, and which probably belonged to some George

Smith or other, whose British spirit of enterprise had carried him in the shape of his capital into these Servian wilds. The swine live in the vast oak forests, from the acorns of which their flesh is said to derive a peculiarly fine flavour, which makes them highly, and, I may say, deservedly prized in the markets of Pest and Vienna.

As I contemplated the immense extent of this noble plain, which everything—climate, soil, wood and water—combines to render productive, I could not help thinking how fine a subject it would prove in the hands of an English farmer; and from thence I was naturally led to reflect on the immense tracts, both here and in Hungary, which I had traversed, lying almost utterly waste, while the labour that might have rendered them productive was almost at an equal discount in England. What noble subjects for speculation! what a prize were such lands to your emigration and colonizing societies!

About three o'clock in the afternoon we passed the borders of Servia, and entered Bulgaria. A little after five we drank coffee at a small khan on the road-side, and reached Nissa, a city said to contain seven thousand houses, a little after nightfall. The road, as we approached the city, became desperately bad; nor did we find any improvement after the lazy Capidjee, who had charge of a pair of crazy wooden gates, had admitted us within the precincts of the place. We passed by a bridge the river Morava, the multitudinous waters of which, dashing and rushing among the ice beneath us in many channels, had a dismal sound: but threading the

long and covered bazar, unilluminated by a single lamp, was a service of greater danger; for we had to trust entirely to good luck, and the instinct of our horses, as the pitchy darkness was only disturbed by the fire which their hoofs struck from the rough pavement as they slipped and staggered along like drunken creatures. This perilous progress terminated, however, in a comfortable khan, where we found a party of Tatars smoking their pipes over a *menkal* of charcoal, and refreshed ourselves with some good coffee. One of these Tatars, who passed among his countrymen as a proficient in French, accosted me in that language; but I could make little out of the few broken words he possessed, beyond the name of the place, and a most obscure and ominous account of the next stage.

It appeared that this stage, which is one of twelve long hours or forty-eight miles, consists principally of the ascent and descent of a lofty mountain, or Balcan, neither of which is without its dangers; and as the night was very threatening, and some snow had begun to fall, Mehemet Aga began to demur as to the expediency of attempting to proceed. But the French-speaking Tatar, although he himself had created the alarm by an exaggerated account of the badness of the road, was the first to ridicule the faintheartedness of his comrade for entertaining an idea of waiting till the moon should be up; and Mehemet, piqued into energy, ordered horses on the instant. So, after chewing another limb or two of the scorched fowls, and bolting a few eggs, off we set a little after nine, clattering and

splashing through the dark and dirty streets, anticipating a cold, wet, and anxious night. I confess it was not without compunction that I left the warm though dirty khan to face the threatening storm; but, after all, we were agreeably disappointed, for just as we rode through the gates of the town the clouds broke and the night became fine, and after a while we jogged merrily along under a clear though sharp and frosty sky.

You must understand that the term *Balcan* appears to be used rather generally to express any lofty range of hills, than as a name for any particular ridge or chain of mountains. The whole range of Mount Hæmus, which stretches from the shores of the Black Sea at Bourgas to those of the Adriatic in Dalmatia, has, indeed, been recognized under this appellation; but almost every lofty cluster it contains has its specific designation, in addition to the general term,—as the Tzarchoo Balcan, the Ihtuman Balcan, the Khojah Balcan, &c. &c. That which we were now going to ascend was the Tzarchoo, or Charjoo Balcan,—and a precious one it proved to us!

The entrance to the pass led through bold and wooded hills, rising at some distance into snow-clad peaks: but the road, though steep and winding, and forming a miserable specimen of engineering, proved better than accounts had led me to expect. By daylight the scenery would no doubt have been fine, but the fitful moonlight displayed it very imperfectly; and, if truth is to be told, I must admit that I saw very little of it at all, for during the greater

part of the ascent I slept very composedly. I found I had by this time quite recovered the faculty of sleeping on my horse, which I had practised in former days with great success. When drowsiness became excessive in long night marches, I used to place my hands upon the holsters before me as a support, and permit my eyes to close; when sleep, troubled and uneasy at first, would soon come over me. After a while, as it became more irresistible, it also grew more profound, each nap continuing perhaps for three minutes; when falling on the horse's neck, or finding myself losing my balance on one side or other, would rouse me with a start. It is astonishing how much good business can be done in these cat-naps. I have dreamt whole histories during them, and so vividly, that I have often caught myself speaking vehemently, and gesticulating with my hand to the ideal form of some one before me, yet knowing all the time it was but a dream; and I have awoke laughing loudly and convulsively at my own folly. Often have I held converse with you, dear ——, in these uneasy visions; and once I nearly fell from my horse, in stretching out to meet the hand which I could have sworn was approaching mine . . . . . Still these naps were refreshing when no better sleep was to be had: but I found my fur pelisse, though absolutely necessary as a covering from cold, a desperate weight upon my neck; its heavy skirts pulled me forward so painfully, that after the journey, when I had thrown it off, it was some time before I could sit erect.

High as it was, the summit of the pass, which we

reached about midnight, was clothed in wood: but rocky peaks, shining in chill snow, rose like ghosts on either hand. The descent was painful and tedious; the horses plunged through the crust of frozen mud up to the knee, and often to the girth, at every step; and it was two in the morning of the 1st of January 1834 before we reached a khan, where we rested for two hours until fresh horses could be got; for it is no more easy matter to turn a sleeping Soorajee out of his warm bed in a bitter winter morning, than it is pleasant for him to obey it; and, in fact, we were on this occasion obliged to proceed with the same horses. Thus passed with me the merry tide of "Hogmenay," ushering in a cold, bleak, and gloomy New Year's Day, instead of the blithe ones I have seen "langsyne."—Well!—

Our route next stage commenced with another ascent, and led through a pretty oak-clad valley, where I first observed an intermixture of beech among the trees; and, lastly, along the noble and richly-cultivated plain of Sakew to the town of that name, the minarets of which give it an imposing appearance, although upon entering it we found ourselves up to the eyes in filth and wretchedness. Changing horses here, at one o'clock we set forth again, upon a sixteen hours' or sixty-four mile stage, to Sophia, to be performed all on the same sorry cattle—and galled and miserable enough they were. I declare to you that I felt many scruples of conscience in mounting these wretched creatures, which you found wincing under you as you got into the saddle, and felt not only that the performance of the

stage was a most doubtful affair, but that if completed, it must be at the expense of infinite torment to, if not of the life of the miserable jade you were bestriding.

Three rivers, deep and rapid from the melting snow, did we cross by fording, a process which I by no means admired; and one in particular was so strong as very nearly to sweep away our little steeds, with us upon them,—it was just touch-and-go. I may remark, by the way, that nothing had struck me more, both in Servia and in the greater part of Bulgaria, than the scarcity of running streams either great or small. The small, sluggish, scarcely creeping rills, that occasionally occupied the bottoms of the valleys, scarcely deserved notice; and this, too, was their state after the fall of much rain and snow. Neither did I observe many traces of torrent devastation: the river-banks were not much cut up, nor soil brought down in any considerable quantity; nor did the faces of the hills exhibit seams or ravines torn by the force of water. And yet the forest-clothing of the country must attract a great deal of moisture; and one would think the Balcan and its snows should afford a sufficient supply of water to create frequent floods.

The weather, which had loured and threatened since morning, took to scolding in right earnest as we reached a khan, the name of which I forget, but in which we took shelter from a blast that came down a glen behind us with a suddenness and force which one seldom sees or hears of except in the pages of a novel. It was a strange wild place this

khan, and well suited to its lonely situation: it was surrounded with a sort of paling, and thus formed a sort of compendium within itself, secure from molestation. The sleet drove like small shot upon its little windows of oiled paper, which had here and there a bit of glass pasted in as a sort of peep-hole; and the horses sought its shelter with an alacrity of instinct which showed their sense of the pitiless pelting of the storm. Here we recruited the inward man with a cup of coffee, and waited for twenty minutes to see whether the gust would blow by; but finding it continue unabated, without prospect of cessation, and feeling the necessity of proceeding, we sallied forth to breast it manfully,—or rather, I should say, to *back it*—for, fortunately, it was nearly in our rear. How either guide or horse could see their way I cannot tell, for I was blinded by the violence of the drift: but these Soorajees have, as it would seem, the faculty of smelling out the path when seeing it is impossible.

After some progress along a plain, or gentle ascent, we entered a narrow gorge, and ascended the bed of a stream, the scenery of which, seen dimly through the falling snow, appeared amazingly grand. The hills and rocks closed overhead, and the torrent roared gloriously beside and beneath us in its way over fall and rapid; and over and over again did we cross its turbid waters, wading belly-deep for many yards together, while the wind and the drift seemed sworn to sweep us away with the fast-flying snow-flakes. It was quite enough of the grand to be agreeable, I assure you; and I was not

sorry when, after about two hours of this work, we reached another khan, the lights from whose windows glanced cheerily through the gloom, and where the Tatar proposed stopping to take some food.

So determinedly tempestuous had the night now become, and so dangerous was the character of the road, which led, as we were told, over another Balcan, that I took some pains to signify to the Tatar my consent to remain where we were until morning, or until the storm should subside, if, in his opinion, the risk of proceeding were excessive: but whether he did not understand me, or that the taunts of the preceding night were still working, and made him jealous of his character for courage and perseverance, I know not; but, after we had swallowed a comfortable dish of eggs and cheese, he summoned us to horse, although the wind was as fierce and the drift as thick as ever.

Ugh! how I shuddered as we mounted and turned to our daily—or, rather, nightly fare, and saw the door of the warm coffee-house close upon us as we committed our bodies to the tender mercies of the storm at the pleasant hour of nine o'clock at night. I felt that we were doing a foolish thing in quitting so good a shelter to take the hill-side, and attempt a mountain-pass in such a snow-storm and at such an hour; but I had no voice in the matter, so away we went. It was an unlucky start. What was to have been expected soon happened: after having ridden some miles, I discovered, from the uncertainty of our direction, and the frequent interchange of question and reply between the Tatar and our guides,

that something was wrong: indeed, the snow was so deep and fresh, and the drift so great, that even had it been broad daylight, to keep the road might have been impossible. After a good deal of evident perplexity, and of mounting the hill-side and descending again at the hazard of being swamped in a snow-wreath, the Soorajee at length stopped: a consultation of rather an angry character took place between the Tatar and him; high words arose, and difference of opinion; the Soorajee had fairly lost his way, and there were we upon the bare hill-face, exposed to the full force of the drift, forced to tramp it up and down, hither and thither, in search of it, exhausting the horses, and frequently falling into holes and crevices imperceptible from being filled with the fresh snow.

Sensible that this could only end disagreeably, I did all in my power to induce them to return to the khan we had left: but a Tatar on such occasions has a will of his own, and, like other people, does not choose to confess himself in the wrong. He did not even deign a reply to my remonstrances, and the search for the road, and the war of words with the Soorajee, continued for a full hour — a long and anxious one it was; when I, who followed them, because I could do nothing else, up hill and down dale, chanced to observe a house of some sort looming large in the snow-drift, which had apparently escaped their notice. I thought it was the khan we had left, and had thus unconsciously wandered back to; and in pointing it out to the Tatar, I thanked Providence for our escape from a bed in the snow:

but instead of making for it as I expected, they started off, leaving it on the left, and continued the search. The building proved to be a landmark which they recognized, and their hopes of finding the track were revived by the sight. All, as it seemed, however, was in vain—we plunged and roamed about at random as before, and I had begun to admit some very gloomy forebodings,—when, by some lucky hit—a boon of Providence, resulting from no skill of theirs, for human skill was at that moment vain—the Tatar struck upon a path which we followed as our only chance, and which led us to the right one. Again we climbed and clambered, one of the party at least, myself to wit, being still in a precious state of uncertainty; nor was it till after two more anxious hours that we gained an elevated piece of table-land, where the regularity of the snow enabled us to proceed more rapidly, and from which a gradual descent led us to the comfortable khan of Khalkhallee. By this time the snow had ceased to fall; but so exhausted were men and horses, that we remained here a few hours while the beasts were fed, and a comfortable pillaw was made for ourselves by the *Babajee*, or keeper of the place.

It was five o'clock on a beautiful frosty morning when we took the road again, and found, after the light appeared, that we were just entering the splendid plain of Sofia, a pretty town, which is somewhat less than half-way between Belgrad and Constantinople. The upper part of this plain is chiefly pasture-land; but the lower, or southern portion, in-

cluding that around the town, is all well cultivated, and studded thickly with villages. The surrounding mountains were at this time covered with snow; but we could see that the glens and ravines, which scarred them deeply, contained also many villages, with their accompanying cultivation. Stiff enough I was, I promise you, and cold to my heart's content, as the first tint of orange light, so welcome to weary travellers, streaking the grey dawn, announced that there would be once more a sun in heaven; and eagerly did I watch the first rays of light as they shot up from behind the level clouds that rested on the horizon, in hopes that they would warm my chilled extremities. But these were soon warmed enough with a witness.

The road, hardened by the frost, was now far better than that of the preceding day or night; and my friend Mehemet was meditating a scamper in true Tatar fashion, to take us into Sofia in style, and make up for lost time. About five miles or more from the city, the spires of which were visible in the plain before us, the Soorajees halted, pulled up to one side, and, springing from their saddles, drew the girths of our horses, looked at the baggage-cattle, settled and tightened their loads, and then mounted again with an alacrity that betokened some approaching feat. Accordingly, scarce had the party resumed its usual order and got into a trot, when a word to the Soorajees, and a howl to the horses, well understood by them, set the whole off at the gallop: — "*Allah-e-ullah!*" shouted the Tatar; — "*Ullah ullah!*" responded the Soorajees; — crack,

crack went the heavy whip of the former on the croups of the load-horses, and away went all — devil take the hindmost! — clattering like mad, endeavouring by speed to escape the running fire of blows discharged on them by their persecutor, notwithstanding that the poor animals had already gone nearly sixty miles in regular break-down roads with very little rest. You might see the miserable brutes shrinking and gathering up their quarters as the lash whistled above them; then throwing out their legs with utter *abandon*, as they dashed forward at the top of their speed, the heavy-loaded ones bending under their burthens, and, unable to rise in their gallop, scuttling and squattering away after a surprising fashion. Not a word was spoken for some time; not a sound was heard, except that of the clattering steeds and an occasional "Ullah!" from the Tatar, or the crack of his heavy whip: we were too busy for anything but holding on, and watching the ground over which we had to pass, which was here and there cut up badly enough by ravines.

Rapidly did we near the town; and as rapidly did my limbs lose their cold and numbness, till at length I was all over in a fierce glow. Near the gate of the city, the ground became broken: "This will bring us up," thought I. But no such thing: on we rattled over great slabs of stone and through pools of mud, whisked through the miserable gateway, and tore along narrow streets; the Soorajees leading, the Tatar following, "yah-ullahing" and flogging away; the horses sometimes on their feet, sometimes on their knees, splashing and flinging oceans of mire

into the shops on either side, and over the vestments of the "faithful," until at length, with a shower of fire-sparks and an explosion of mud from their "armed heels," we all brought sharp up at the entrance of the post-house of Sofia.

In a perfect lather, I got off with some deliberation from the back of my trembling, palpitating little nag, scarcely knowing whether all was safe or not, to pass one half-hour at rest, while fresh horses should be prepared, and some eggs fried in fat, with black, heavy doughy bread, the fare of the place, should be discussed. This was soon done, and, as it was daylight and the weather fine, there was no delay in getting horses ready; so just as the cooling process had commenced in my frame, we all mounted again. But, wiser by experience this time, I got rid of my heavy cloak and trappings, which were added to the burthen of one of the loadsters. Away we went again, helter-skelter, through the rest of the town and a burying-ground beyond it; but the road for the first half-dozen miles from Sofia being intersected by water-courses and branches of a river, we went over them at a more moderate pace, and could look a little about us at the noble plain we were traversing. This, after all, is the chief object of attraction about Sofia; for the city, like most Turkish towns, though it presents an imposing exterior, is filthy and mean within; nor, although it be the seat of a three-tailed Pasha, does it contain one building that seems worthy of notice. The grand mountain of *Euch-koollah* (or the Three-capped) Balcan, over a shoulder of which our last night's rambles had

led us, seemed towering in cloudy majesty over the very city; and some other very imposing clusters were to be seen near; although the state of the atmosphere as the day advanced rendered them dim and indistinct. These hills are bare of wood, or only partially covered with stunted coppice.

I was calculating with some satisfaction on a peaceful stage, as we rode quietly along; but no sooner had we cleared the broken country, than "*Allah-e-ullah!*" once more roared out the Tatar; — "*Hoo-hoo-hoo—eyah!*" echoed Soorajee, down comes the shower of blows, and off start the horses again full tilt. Again setting teeth and knees, I stuck close to my saddle and prepared for a tumble, horse and man. Soon did we approach a ridge of rising grounds, which it was not unreasonable to imagine would bring us up; but "quite the contrary:" a renewed volley of heavy thumps on the croups of the beasts, and a fresh and louder roar from Soorajee and Tatar, was all the notice taken of this new feature of the road. Up spring the horses, and away go their riders like hey-go-mad, over height and hollow, hill and dale:—"The d—l!" muttered I internally, as I gathered up the reins with a firmer gripe, and looked at the gallant Tatar sitting like a rock, his looser garments flying in the wind, and the load-horses shrinking and skipping from his formidable whip, and bending and squattering along, so that I expected every moment to see their slender limbs snap and fly from under them. It was more like a gallop of the "wild huntsman," than any horsemanship of mortal strain. My blood curdled

more than once as I saw the little animals urged down steep descents with sharp turns, where a false step would have tilted them over the rock, and every moment I looked for an accident. And false steps there were in abundance: but though down on knees, on breast, on nose, the skill of the Soorajees and the spirit of the beasts saved the tumble and recovered them when one would have sworn it was impossible.

At last, by the blessing of Providence, we gained the height, where there was a bit of plain, and then away we scoured again. For a while not a word: the dirt flew in large clods from the heels of the horses, spattering the face and hitting heavy thumps on the breast of the hindmost of the party, and I instinctively inclined to the left, out of the *wake* of the rest. Scarcely had I done so, when, lo! a slide of one of the loadsters in the mire—a desperate effort to recover—a cloud of mud and dirt flying in all directions—and down comes the poor beast with a roll and tumble, turning over and over with its load, and almost pulling out the tail of its leader, to which, by a halter, its own head is fastened; while that, in turn, by the sudden jerk, almost drags from his seat the Soorajee, who has the leading rein round his arm, ere he can stop the career of his own steed. All was confusion:—"*Ah, Pesavink!*" exclaimed the Soorajee, as he sprang from his saddle and ran to the prostrate horse:—"*Hoh, Kiupe-ogloo!*" "Oh, you son of a dog!" growled the Tatar, as he descended more deliberately to assist; and, to be sure, the business looked bad enough, for there lay the poor brute between his loads,—"dead for a

ducat," you would have said, — motionless, and in the most perplexing position. But the mischief was greater in appearance than in reality: like Knockecrogery, the poster was a 'cute one; but he had to deal with 'cuter chaps than himself. After turning him up the right way, an operation which the Soorajee performed to an accompaniment of all the most elegant expletives of his language, that functionary proceeded to pull forth one leg from under the fallen brute; then taking hold of its head, he tugged at that, while the Tatar discharged on its other end a thundering blow of his scourge,—a favour which the animal acknowledged by a heavy grunt. A second blow, accompanied by a loud oath, convinced the fallen animal that his persecutor was in earnest, and induced it to put forth both fore-feet in attitude to rise; and at a third, emphatically delivered, with a struggle and a bound it scrambled to its legs, on which it stood trembling with terror for the consequences of its *faux-pas:* nor did these tarry long of overtaking it. A Tatar proceeds, it would seem, on the principle of punishing every lapse committed by his horses, whether the fault lies with them or their riders: if not the most just and humane, it is the easiest proceeding for him, and has probably been found the best for making the poor brutes cautious and surefooted. "*Hah, Kiupe-ogloo! Anasenna! Babasenna!*" &c. &c., thunders out the Soorajee; and at each of these maledictory ejaculations, down falls another heavy stripe upon the unlucky brute, which, cognizant of the process from long experience, only tucks its tail between its quarters like a dog,

skips about a little, trembling the while, until the passion of its leader has abated, and the operation of refitting its load is terminated; when, the halter being readjusted and Soorajee and Tatar remounted, away again they go at score, as if nothing had happened.

I assure you, that when I made this stage at the rate and in the way I have described, I could scarcely master my inclination to remonstrate; and it was only the consideration, that men whose life is spent in such journeys, and on this very ground, must know better than I could what their horses can do,—with, perhaps, a suspicion that any remonstrance of mine would be as little attended to as understood,—that kept me quiet. Assuredly, however, the ground we went over at this desperate rate was of a most dangerous character, as well from natural inequality as from its present slippery condition; and I suspect that my friend Mehemet was urged on to the feat by one of those stimuli in the head which are said to be worth two in the heel,—in a word, that he had taken either a dose of opium or of wine at Sofia.

We reached Ihtuman, a town in the middle of a small plain, by eight in the evening, and left it again at nine, in a night that threatened and growled almost as much as the last, to cross another Balcan, which takes its name from the place. Again came the effort of wrenching ourselves from the warm khan to encounter a snowy night and cross a snow-covered mountain. It proved a severe stage for the horses, for the road was an intricate and uneven

one, winding and crossing among a congregation of ravines, cut deep in the soil of an earthy mountain, shaggy with oak, and beech, and brushwood; and the Tatar drove them bravely on. But the night turned out better than we expected; for though dark, and though the bitter wind seemed to blow through a snow-cloud, speaking of storm and tempest, these happily kept off. The scenery seemed interesting, and sometimes grand; but the darkness, and the illusion produced by the snow, defeated all efforts at judging of it correctly.

It was astonishing to see how admirably the baggage-horses kept their feet at the rapid pace with which we threaded these defiles, and particularly how they scrambled and slid over the great ledges of rock which sometimes occurred in their path, washed bare in the water-courses: but the fear of the whip does wonders; and many a time when I thought the poor brutes were on their noses, or over the bank, it was but a struggle and a dash, and all was right again. In this way, by a severe ascent, tortuous and teazing, and sometimes nervous enough, did we win the top of the pass, where a little khan, or, rather, police-station, afforded us a cup of coffee, and where the remains of a Roman archway gives testimony that the pass was fortified in times of yore, while it also nearly marks the half-way point between Constantinople and Belgrad. A long descent succeeded, and led us to another khan; where having again refreshed ourselves with coffee, we held on our way till morning. Day broke upon us in an extensive plain, along which, had man and

horse been fresh, we might have made good play; but the exact reverse was the case. The Tatar, exhausted by his last night's frolics and exertions, was jogging on, fast asleep in his saddle, at the pace which pleased his steed. *Tchelebee* was not a bit better, and the Soorajee kept us both company; so there we went, dozing away, rocking from side to side, myself often within an ace of falling over the horse's head, and the beasts all taking their own way, until the warm rays of the sun, now high above the mountains, dispelled our slumbers, and showed us the groves of poplars and willows that shroud the town of Tatar-Bazarchic, where we were to change horses, close to us.

I must say, that the khans, or inns, we have seen on this road, are by no means calculated to give a stranger any high idea of Turkish cleanliness, or notions of comfort in travelling. Dirty holes they generally are, having a platform from six to ten feet broad, raised two feet and a half above the mud floor, on either side of a passage leading from the entrance to the fire-place, which is generally opposite. These platforms are sometimes covered with coarse mats, decayed through age and filth; and on them lie, spread for the use of passengers, or piled in recesses and corners, a variety of those clean and inviting mattresses and pillows to which I have before made allusion. That space of the mud floor which remains unoccupied by the platforms, and forms the passage, is generally filthy to the last degree, being the receptacle for the water in which people have washed—coffee-grounds, and other nui-

sances, which are unceremoniously thrown overboard from the said platforms. These, when you enter, are generally found occupied by a most motley assemblage of Tatars and travellers like yourself, who lie snoring under their wet cloaks and in their dirty boots upon the loathsome heaps; and by the villagers or townsfolk, who come for their cup and their pipe as people in England for their pot or their dram: and it is amusing to see the tobacco-bag passing silently but constantly from hand to hand; for the bag appears always to be held a sort of public property—it is taken from all without ceremony, and never refused to neighbour or stranger; a privilege which is so practically maintained, that if you enter a well-attended coffee-room with a full pouch, it is ten to one that you carry it away quite empty: and all this passes often in perfect silence.

The town of Tatar-Bazarchick, like all I have yet seen in Turkey, is dirty and mean. Even the minarets, which have an imposing appearance from a distance and are lofty in comparison with the houses, become trifling in size and height when approached. They are built of wood, and are surrounded by a tall, conical, extinguisher-like spire, covered with metal, above which glitters a gilded crescent. The place is situated in an extensive plain, bordered by the Balcans, which frowned over it in cloud and storm, and watered by the fine river Meereech, along the banks of which we trotted sharply the next stage of six hours to Philipopoli.

This large town or city is picturesquely built upon an irregular ridge, and at the foot of a cluster of

rocky hills that rise in the plain on the banks of the river, and forms so very interesting an object that I should have gladly stopped to sketch it: but, alas! we are travelling Tatars, and cannot afford time for such gratifications, for Mehemet Aga had taken another active fit, and away we went "galloping, galloping across the plain"—passed the wooden bridge that spans the stream, like a flash of fire—clattered over the stones and splashed through the mud pools of the streets, nor halted, as usual, till we reached the post-house.

Here I resolved to take the refreshment of the bath. So, no sooner had we dismounted than off went Tatar and I, having first ordered a good dinner, to the Hummaum of best repute in the city. A dirty job we had of it, paddling through the *mud*-logged streets, or stepping along the stone pathway at the sides, which was neither whole nor safe. The bath itself, though far from elegant, was comfortable and decent: we entered first into a large and lofty vaulted apartment, around the sides of which were raised platforms divided into compartments, each of which contained two sofas, with mattresses and pillows, and carpets on the floor. The centre was occupied by a large stove, around which the attendants were constantly flitting, some naked and some clothed.

On most of the sofas lay persons preparing for the bath—or resting, pipe in hand—or sipping coffee, or taking a nap after it; but scarcely a word was heard from any one. Here, taking possession of one of the compartments, the Tatar and I undressed for the bath. You must recollect that Tatars are all

gentlemen, who sit in your presence and eat with you; and my ignorance of the language, and, indeed, of the ways of a Turkish bath, made me well pleased to treat my friend Mehemet to a scrub, along with myself. All was conducted with great decorum. The living statues round, some of whom were going through the form of mid-day prayers, paid not the smallest attention to us, and we passed into the next apartment, a small room, hotter than the exterior vault, in which we saw several persons also seated or lying under the hands of the operators. —It has often occurred to me, that were a perfect stranger, ignorant of what he was about to see, introduced into an Eastern bath, his first thought would be of the infernal regions, or of the inquisition and of torture: naked figures hurrying to and fro in the murky atmosphere; others lying on their backs under what would appear the torturing hands of officials, who are twisting their limbs, sitting like nightmares on their breasts, scraping off their skin, cracking their joints, &c. &c.; and all this in a huge dark series of vaults scarcely lighted by one or two dimly-burning lamps, with mists and curling vapours and splashing waters, and all the rest of it. The shrieks and groans, indeed, are wanting; but I am not sure that the silence which reigns through the dismal and almost impenetrable obscurity, interrupted at times by a wild voice (that of the Dullâk calling out for some utensil wanted) echoing through the vault, or the occasional intonation of a Mahometan prayer or pious ejaculation, is not more appalling and mysterious still. Yet all this only de-

scribes the greatest luxury of the people of the country—a luxury which consumes half their time, and often, inordinately taken, their health also.

From this second ante-room we were led to the interior of the bath, which was another extensive vault, paved with stone flags, and divided into two compartments, one hotter than the other. Both were hot enough, as I found to my cost; for it is considered a piece of attention to heat the baths well, and the Tatar had ordered this to be done. They had not neglected his commands, assuredly, for the vault was almost as hot as that place which ought not to be named to "ears polite." I could scarcely breathe; but as I knew that this sort of oppression is generally relieved as soon as perspiration breaks out, I bore it manfully for a while, and suffered operations to proceed, till I grew quite faint: a glass of cold water scarcely produced momentary relief, and, unable to endure more, I got up and staggered to the coolest end of the vault; upon which the attendant, seeing my condition, conducted me back to the middle apartment. The relief was immediate; the contrast made me almost shudder, but the difference of temperature was not in reality so great as to produce bad effects.

While I sat here recovering, I could not help thinking what a glorious mode of torture and death my sufferings might suggest to a tyrant! To enclose victims in a small vault—to heat it gradually, and slowly to stifle them by this pleasant process, —they would undergo the purification of fire in one sense at least. If a royal voluptuary offered

immense rewards for the discovery of a new pleasure, what do not the Neros and Caligulas of the earth, if such there be, owe to me for this pretty, hint of a new species of torture!

All this time, the Tatar who had accompanied me in, remained lying down in the hottest corner, enduring all without a word of complaint. He was more habituated to such stewing-matches, and remained after I was forced to quit the place. I do believe, had I remained, the consequence might have been apoplexy. I did not return, as you may suppose, till the bath had cooled considerably; and after the process was completed, they enveloped me in hot linen and conducted me to repose upon the sofa where I had undressed. Coffee and pipes were then served, and I enjoyed a comfortable nap, mightily refreshed by ablution from a fortnight's dirt, contracted in the vortex of mud and discomfort in which I had been moving since my departure from Vienna. The Tatar came out a few minutes after me perfectly exhausted, and confessed that the bath had been made *a little too hot*—that the Hummaumchee had done us too much *honour*.

A good pillaw for dinner completed the restorative process, and after a delay of four hours, three of which were spent in the bath, we set off just as it became dark; but our path was illuminated for many miles by the fires of some dozen of charcoal manufactories around the town, the red glare of which tinged with crimson the clouds of a dark and threatening night. The weather, however, was better than its promise; little either of snow or of rain

fell, and as the road was level we made such good way, that by seven next morning we reached the post of Eskew, about sixty miles from Philipopoli, a large village situated in an extensive undulating plain, covered principally with dwarf oak and coppice wood.

There is nothing more striking perhaps about a Turkish town or village, than the extent of burying-grounds attached to them, and the great disproportion in number which the mansions of the dead bear to those of the living. Not that it is difficult to account for this peculiarity in a country where the practice is never to disturb a grave, but to assign to each pilgrim his own resting-place; so that we see the tombs of many departed generations, while one only of the living requires lodgings at a time, and the same tenements may serve for many successive tenants. But the multitude of these memorials of the dead seen collected together, and outnumbering so ominously the signs of life and population, cannot fail to impress the beholder very forcibly with thoughts of the myriads who have passed away—who have gone the road we must all follow,—in short, of the exceeding frailty of human existence, and that "in the midst of life we are in death."

At this place the burying-grounds exhibited a singular spectacle, disposed as they were upon the brow of certain rising grounds above the village: for as every grave was marked with a slender upright white stone, on the top of which a turban is sometimes rudely indicated, or some verses from the Koran are inscribed, they looked in the beams

of the rising sun just like the remains of some young plantation that had been suddenly blasted, and the withered rain-bleached stumps of which alone remained.

I know you love to "muse amongst the tombs," and you would have been struck with many of these "cities of the silent" that came under my brief observation as we rapidly swept along. One there was, not far from this very village, which might afford subject for some curious speculation. It was situated in a wood of oak; the trees of which, rising amidst the tombs, were for the most part decayed, and must have been of great age. Which were the first possessors of the soil,—the dead men, or the living vegetables? Had these old tenants of the soil grown up, and flourished and decayed, since the reliques of mortality had been deposited there?—the grave-stones were grey and ancient-looking enough to warrant such a belief, and there was in it food enough for reflection.

But are we never to get farther than this same Eskew? you will begin to ask. Yes; but yet I must tell you of a poor little negro boy that was shown us just as we were mounting our horses. Somebody—the postmaster, I believe—had purchased the little wretch as a matter of charity for the sum of five piastres, or one shilling sterling; and he really did look more as if he belonged to the brutes that perish, than to the human race. He had just been put into comfortable though very coarse clothes; and the poor little fellow, as black as a bit of rough jet, with little sparkling eyes, was smiling with all

his might to show his delight at being noticed and cared for. Slaves of this description meet, as you must have heard, not only with kindness, but with the highest possible favour, in Turkey; and there is no saying that this little wretch may not become the favourite of some great pashah and influence the fate of a whole province, — that is, if Turkey be permitted to go on in the same way it has for some ages past.

Our way from Eskew lay first through a fine and beautiful valley with a great deal of cultivation, enclosed at a distance by lofty hills glittering in snow, and then across a series of dreary and barren heights partially covered with low brushwood of oak, juniper, thorns, and a bush like the *byer* of India or the *konár* of the south of Persia. This was part of a great tract of similar land that stretched on every side.

At twenty-four miles on, we halted at Hermanloo, a little village where a late pashah had built a superb khan for the accommodation of travellers, with a fine mosque opposite it for the comfort of their souls. But the pashah was dead, and the khan was now fast going to ruin: the roof of one wing was entirely gone, and the sheets of metal which covered the other, as well as a great and handsome dome in the centre, were rapidly disappearing. Thousands and tens of thousands of pigeons and jackdaws had taken possession of the ruins; but there still remained some cells and a building or two, which served to shelter us during the half-hour we stayed before pushing on to Hebepcheh.

It was a lovely day, and our way to this village lay through a beautiful valley, the bed of the river Meereech, and enclosed by snow-capped mountains. When we had approached within some four or five miles of our stage, the Tatar took one of his galloping fits, and setting off at speed with the customary yells of preparation, away we went like "beggars on horseback," till, in spite of the greasy state of the road, we had nearly reached the village, when all at once the legs of one of the load-horses fairly flew from under him, and down he came, as if he had been shot, upon one of the trunks he was carrying, and rolling over on his back, after a fit of kicking, lay quietly with his load as if he were dead. This brought us all up, and I thought the horse was killed and my trunk knocked to pieces; but on running to the fallen animal he was found undamaged, and being relieved and lifted up, stood firmly on his legs as ever: the trunk, (I recommend its maker, Mr. Handford, No. 6, Strand, to all travellers,) instead of being utterly demolished, had only suffered a contusion which a little dimmed its beauty, but was as firm as ever.

Changing horses with all speed, on we trotted, with a fine evening and beautiful scenery, along the Meereech. At nine o'clock we crossed the stream at Mustapha Pashah by a stone bridge, and, until fresh horses were got ready, repaired to a khân, which was crowded with guests, and afforded a scene which amused me very much, as I am sure it would you, if I could stamp on your imagination its exact "form and pressure." I have mentioned the scepticism into which I had been drilled as to the effects

of carbonic gas — that is, the fumes of charcoal — upon a Turk; and had any lurking credulity remained, the scene of this evening must have dispelled it all: I even begin to think myself proof against the poison of fixed air.

Among a number of groups of Turks and Greeks, be-furred, be-fezzed, be-turbaned, and be-robed in all imaginable variety of dress, and who sat stewing, as usual, over their pots of burning charcoal, enveloped in dense clouds of tobacco smoke, and in an atmosphere thick and unwholesome, loaded with animal effluvia, and heated above blood-heat, there lay reclined upon a dirty mattress a man who was declaiming in a very voluble manner, and who appeared to attract the attention of every one present. The portion of this personage's costume which appeared from under an enormous wolf-skin cloak, and which amounted to little more than his cap and a button of his surtout, was sufficient to show that he was neither Turk nor Greek, and a very little attention to his *lingo* discovered him to be a Russian. He was, indeed, a courier, or *feltyager*, of that country, who, under the influence of *raakee*, (the brandy of the country made by the Greeks,) was edifying the assembly with an account of his own exploits.

On observing me enter, he hailed me as a brother-courier, and poured out a volley of earnest protestations, in what, I doubt not, was very classical Russ, though unfortunately the eloquence of his appeal was lost upon me; and as it turned out that he could speak no language with which I was acquainted, except some half-a-dozen useless words of French, our colloquial intercourse soon came to a close.

The strange behaviour and grotesque gesticulations of the Russian, and his uncouth jargon of mingled Russ, Turkish, French, and Transylvanian, excited more mirth, and in an audible shape too, than I ever expected to hear proceed from the mouths of grave Turks: the coffee-house was absolutely in a roar; it was literally,

" 'Tis merry in hall when beards wag all,"

for the beards were wagging with a witness. But it was a mirth mingled with disgust and contempt; and my Tatar took occasion to point out with no small pride the difference between his own charge and that of his unlucky comrade who was attending the *Feltyager:* — " Observe that beast!" said he; " he is a drunkard, — a dog, — in fine, a Russian: but this one, — *my* Tchelebee, never tastes wine nor raakee, nor any of those forbidden potations." And, in fact, I now found, as I had always done on previous occasions, that abstinence from such things was not only salubrious during the constant and violent exercise I was undergoing, but procured for me a greater degree of respect and consideration from the natives than I should otherwise have enjoyed; for though many of the Turks, and the Tatars almost to a man, indulge very freely in the use of spirits and wine, they feel the force of the inhibition, and respect the virtue of forbearance in those who practise it.

We left the Russian in his glory, and the stifling khan, to face another cold night; and, only halting a few minutes to swallow a dish of eggs fried in butter, which were dressed for us by the unhappy

Babajee of a little khan on the way, whom we knocked up about midnight to dress them for us, we cantered and trotted on till about two in the morning of the 5th, when we entered the town of Adrianople.

A long and break-neck ride through bazars pitch-dark, and streets little better, and fetlock-deep in mud, brought us to the post-house, where I found it would be necessary to remain till daylight in order to obtain the Mutsellim's order for relays of post-horses on the way to Constantinople: without this document, it seems, travellers are obliged to carry the same horses all the way. I only learned this fact from the Tatar as we entered the city; but as there was an English consul residing in the place, it gave me no uneasiness, for I was convinced that an application to him would do the business. Orders were accordingly given to the postmaster to inform the Consul that an English gentleman in charge of despatches had arrived at the post-house, and to request that his dragoman, or interpreter, might attend early in the morning. Having taken these measures, I threw myself, covered with mud and dirt as I was, upon one of their filthy rugs, and was soon fast asleep.

Scarcely had I closed my eyes, however, when a knock at the door caused me to start up, and I heard a voice outside inquiring who it was that wanted the English Consul? Shaking my ears, I asked if it was the Dragoman, and whether the Consul was an Englishman? The English accent in which the reply was made was music to my ears,—the most

satisfactory answer possible to my question: it was, in fact, the Consul, Mr. Blunt, himself, whom my messenger had roused from his bed at that unseasonable hour, and who, in return to my apologies, insisted in the kindest manner on my accompanying him to his house, where I might enjoy the comfort of a good bed, until the hour when the necessary order could be obtained from the Mutsellim. Meeting with a countryman was, however, not the best soporific: I was desirous to learn all I could regarding this part of Turkey, of the route to Stamboul, and of all that was going on there, while the Consul was eager for English news; so, in spite of long previous watchfulness and fatigue, we sat up talking of such matters for two hours before going to bed — and even then it was rather to rest than to sleep, for all disposition to slumber had provokingly fled.

In the morning, after a further gossip, and the first comfortable meal I had tasted since leaving Semlin, I quitted Adrianople about eleven o'clock, with my order for relays in my pocket, and my provision-bags replenished by the kindness of Mr. Blunt. It appears an absurd inconsistency in the posting regulations, that in this part of Turkey, so near the capital, a special request, on the part of the ambassador, or consul-general, to government is required to procure an order for post-horses, and that the order of the Pashah of Belgrad, which sufficed to provide any given number of posters, loses its value at Adrianople; so that relays can in general be had only by private bargain at four times the government price. I suspect it is a job to favour

the Roumelian postmasters. Joseph Hume might find work in Turkey, as well as at home.

I saw little of Adrianople on this occasion; and that little did not strike me favourably. It is one of the largest cities in European Turkey after the capital itself; is situated on a rising ground, but lies under a low range of hills, in the rich valley of the Meereech; and is surrounded by orchards, vineyards, and gardens. There are several mosques, the minarets of which give a pleasing relief to the multitude of red-tile-topped houses; one of them is said to be of great size, and well worth seeing. Such of the bazars as I saw seemed nothing extraordinary in themselves; but as I rode through them, they were gay with a multitude of people in every variety of costume, particularly Greek; and I observed among them several very pretty Greek women, for it was some feast or fair day, and many of the shops were gaily decked out and made a good show. The city is said to contain seventeen thousand houses and eighty-five thousand souls, and enjoys a considerable trade; but it suffered much during the Russian invasion in 1828, and afterwards from plague, so that I suspect the number may be now overrated. A vast extent of burying-grounds stretch out to the south-east, and indicate how busy death has been at one time or other: but this, as I have before observed, furnishes no grounds for judging of either late mortality or present population.

This is all I know of Adrianople, which I left at a promising gallop, on as lovely a forenoon as ever gladdened the heart of a traveller, but which changed

to a grim cold evening, with a piercing wind that brought with it showers of sleet and snow. From hence to the Sea of Marmora, and, indeed, to the gates of Constantinople, the whole surface of Roumelia consists of a succession of wavy steppes, much like those of Hungary or Southern Russia; and the eye, which, from the first height, looks back upon Adrianople, with its domes, and minarets, and gardens, and villages, and extensive surrounding enclosures, casts forward a saddened gaze over bleak plains, without a single object to fix the attention; no trees — no villages — no interest: but we had good galloping ground, and the fine day kept our spirits up while it lasted. But with evening, as I said before, fell the glory of the weather; and by ten at night it got so dark, and snowed so fast, that our Soorajee lost his way, and we nearly lost our Tatar in seeking it. These plains of Bourgos are notorious for the bewilderment of travellers at night: they are so wide and void of landmarks, that if once you go astray, there is no such thing as finding the track again; and several persons, after wandering the whole night, have found themselves in the morning almost where they started.

Luckily for us, the point where we went astray was near the village, and the vicinity of a water-course saved us from a similar fate. But we had nearly an hour of most unpleasant suspense; for the Tatar, who had gone to the right, was bewildered with the falling snow, and wandered so far from the party as to be some time out of hearing. The water-course brought us together again, and

finally conducted us to Bourgos, where the new Soorajee declaring that he could not answer for guiding us rightly in such a night, we resolved to remain until at least the sky should clear a little. Our quarters were anything but tempting; dirty, and swarming with vermin: but such matters weigh little with a Tatar; let him once go to sleep, and rouse him who can. Instead of looking out for the clearing of the weather, he went snoozing on until near five in the morning, when my repeated tuggings at length brought him to a sense of his duty.

At this place we once again fell in with the Russian courier, who had passed us at Adrianople, and whom we found roaring out unceasingly, but in vain, for his dear *raakee*. The khan of Bourgos, alas! could not furnish him with a single dram. We departed together, and jogged on as well as the deep and execrable state of the roads would permit; and that was for the most part a little better than a walk. The only attempt at speed which we made was not attended with brilliant success: for, having found a bit of ground harder than the rest, and pushed our beasts into a gallop, the load-horse, which carried my trunks, slipping in the mud, went once more head over heels, and with greater damage to my property; for the Soorajee having foolishly made fast some of his lashings to the handle of my fine trunk, the shock fairly wrenched it off, and otherwise battered and defaced the concern: we lost nearly an hour in refitting our damages, and thus paid dearly for our short escapade.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we first got sight

of the Sea of Marmora, looking black and angry enough for the Black Sea itself, and with a whole ocean of dark and angry clouds rolling over it: yet though our progress continued slow from deep mud, we were fortunately spared either snow or rain from above. A very cold and painful night succeeded this weary day. The stage from Chorley to Sillivria is a long forty miles, with many steep pulls; and the road being all in a deep loamy soil, it was with difficulty we got on at all. But that from Sillivria (which place we reached late at night), what with its length,—for it is fifty long miles,—the execrable state of the roads, which were absolute sponges filled with melted snow, and the bleak, bleak wind that blew on us with unremitting severity, was nearly a floorer to man and horse. Twice did the baggage-cattle give up and fairly refuse to proceed, and a dozen times had we to pick up and refit the fallen loads; and it was only by dint of the greatest exertions on the part of Tatar and Soorajee that we did not stick altogether.

Our friend the Russian courier, whose wisdom was greater or whose zeal was less than ours, came to the resolution of not exposing his person to these inconveniences. He took leave of us at Chorley, where having obtained a stout supply of *raakee*, he called for a sleeping-place, determined to spend the hours of danger and darkness in his favourite occupation, and, I have no doubt, soon got royally drunk.

During our night's stage the road lay frequently along the shore of the Sea of Marmora, the waves of which were booming and the spray flying up to the

very feet of our horses; and at eight in the morning of the 7th January we reached the singular village of Buyook-chek majee, or Ponte-grande, upon the outlet of a lake or back-water close to the sea, with its romantic burying-ground and fine old cypresses and sycamores, three hours distant from Constantinople. Here we took our last sip of coffee, and pushing onwards, about nine o'clock came in sight of the domes and minarets of the capital, rising over its western wall in the distance. The view of Stamboul from this side is by no means a favourable one: indeed, as the city lies chiefly on a slope inclining towards the north-east and consequently away from the western approach, little of it can be seen beyond the said walls, domes, and minarets; while the crest of the rising ground that forms this slope hides from sight the whole harbour, with the suburbs of Pera and Galata.

We passed three of the Sultan's new barracks, which are huge quadrangles with towers at the corners. One of these, the largest and finest, had been partially damaged by fire, and, inconsistently enough, one would say, in spite of the vast sum it must have cost, remains unrepaired, while others are being built in various quarters: such is the improvident sort of management in these matters here. Our approach to the capital lay not through the quarters of the living, but of the dead; we entered, not Constantinople, but the receptacle of its departed generations,—one of those immense burying-grounds by which it is surrounded—a vast grove of cypress-trees, where grave stones, "thick as leaves in Valombrosa,"

form a striking underwood, as it were, and make a silent but powerful appeal to the mind of the passers-by. Who, indeed, can look upon these ancient trees, that have witnessed the rise and fall of generation after generation, and have stood hereditary mourners over the infinitely varied scenes of human woe that spring from the universal doom "Thou must die," and not be strongly moved? But the Tatar and Soorajee jogged on their way, drumming on the hides of the jaded horses, which, sinking in the mud at every step, and often plunging shoulder-deep into some hole, could scarcely be urged along. These prosaic realities put all sentimental visions to flight, and I had enough to do to provoke my own miserable hack to a suitable pace. Even at the very end of their labours, within sight of the goal, one of the poor animals, quite done-up, sank under its load, and was only raised again with the utmost difficulty. At length, after threading a narrow and crowded street, we reached a wooden quay upon the arm of the sea which forms the harbour, and separates Pera and Galata from Constantinople; and I question whether the satisfaction of the jaded beasts at being relieved from their burthens was greater than mine at seeing the baggage safely deposited in a boat, and them retreating from the wharf.

The Tatar accompanied me, and we were wafted in the "light caik" down the harbour among the Sultan's huge men-of-war, the reliques of Navarino, to a wharf at Pera, whence I went to seek the consul, Mr. Cartwright: nor was it until I entered the apartments of that gentleman that I recollected the strange

figure I made. Covered with mud from head to foot; dressed in the shulwars and boots of a Tatar, with a black travelling cap on my head sorely bedabbled with dirt and rain; my eye and the whole side of my face black, blue, and green from the effects of the kick of a horse, and my person girt with sundry nondescript appendages required on the journey; it was no wonder that Mr. Cartwright should at first cast an eye of some suspicion upon the owner of so singular an equipage, and I saw that it would be as well to lose no time in producing my credentials. This measure did, to be sure, produce an instantaneous change. "God bless me!" said he, "are you the Mr. Fraser I expected here from Persia some ten or twelve years ago, but who went to England by another route?"—"The very same," said I. "Oh, I beg your pardon, then; but really"—and his eye glanced rather waggishly at my figure; upon which I laughed and then he laughed, and we became excellent friends in a moment.

Duty required that my despatches should be immediately delivered to our ambassador, whose residence was at Therapia, a village on the Bosphorus some fifteen miles above Constantinople. Accordingly, "accoutred as I was,"—for to adonize would have cost more time than I could spare, — I clawed up my ample inexpressibles with one hand, and marching with some difficulty to the Tope-hanch, the Hungerford-stairs of Pera, where *caiks* float thick and ready as wherries there or at London-bridge, for the life of them, stowed myself and my paraphernalia into one of these elegant and classic vessels, and

embarked for Therapia upon that celebrated strait which separates Europe from Asia.

I wish I were able to convey to you a just idea of this lovely arm of the sea, and the variety and beauty of the scenery which our row to Therapia disclosed. The shores of the Bosphorus are formed of bold and rocky hillocks, none of them very lofty, but all picturesque in themselves, and rendered infinitely more so by the mingled profusion of houses and gardens, and woods and fields and enclosures, which cover them. Along their base, close to the water's edge, and in many cases overhanging it, extends a continuous chain of buildings, palaces, mosques, towers, and houses of shapes the most various and characteristic, in rows and clumps and groups,

"Like orient pearls at random strung."

Burying-grounds with their cypress-groves, and gardens with many fine trees, fringed some of the declivities, or lay peeping out from the clefts of the rocks; while most of the heights were crowned with kiosks or pleasure houses. A multitude of little bays and recesses and creeks open out at every turn, each of which has its own nest-like village with country-houses and gardens adorning its banks, and often swarming below with vessels of various sorts, whose masts seem to mingle with the stems of the fruit-trees on the shore, or whose white sails shoot along and gleam in every corner. Half-way up stand two fine old castles of singular and massy architecture, whose great round towers frown at each other across the strait: these were built by the Genoese in days

of yore, when they were great and powerful in these parts.*

But the chief interest of the scene lay near the point of embarkation, at the Tophana, or arsenal of artillery. There was the long range of the arsenal itself, the green waves ever lap-lapping its sea-girt walls, with a beautiful mosque just above it, and a fountain or reservoir of the most exquisite taste close by; while the houses of Pera rose tier over tier above all to the top of the hill on which it is built. On the other hand was the multitude of shipping with the clear blue water of the harbour, and the Seraglio with its gardens and its mosques, its minarets and cypresses, dipping their very feet in the limpid wave that reflected every wall and spire and pinnacle. Right opposite was the large and equally picturesque suburb of Scutari; and further up, on both sides of the straits, gleamed the numerous and extensive palaces of the Sultan in all the freshness of white and green paint, with many dwellings of the nobles little less in size and splendour; while the water around us was dotted with a thousand boats and craft of every description, and sparkled all over with white and gently swelling sails.

Nothing could be imagined more lively and interesting. The sun was hot, the day was bright; and though the wind blew cold and many of the heights were powdered with snow, the scene was animating and beautiful in the highest degree: in summer or spring it must be enchanting. Oh, what a contrast

* Rather, I believe, by the celebrated Mahmood, before he took Constantinople.

did the present moment afford to the cold and weariness and gloom of the last week! and how gratefully did I enjoy the bodily rest which my quiet seat in the boat afforded, after that week's continued exertion! During the first forty-eight hours from leaving Semlin I had ridden a hundred and eighty miles, and, in spite of execrable roads, desperate weather, and many delays, I had, without inconvenience or ill consequences, completed the whole distance of two hundred Turkish hours, or about seven hundred and fifty miles, in eight days and three-quarters :—pretty well, I think you will allow, for a gentleman of a *certain* age, who had not crossed a horse a dozen times during the preceding dozen years.

A couple of hours' rowing carried us to Therapia, where I delivered my despatches and announced my arrival to the ambassador, Lord Ponsonby. But, taught by experience, I took the precaution to send up, along with other documents, a note of introduction which I had received from our friend ——, and which rendered further explanations unnecessary. I had enjoyed the means of improving my outward man, and wore a more decent aspect than at Pera, all but my black eye : that, indeed, was irremediable and suspicious ; but a journey Tatar carries an excuse with it for many awkward contingencies, and even Lady Ponsonby was good-natured enough, under such circumstances, to overlook my hideousness, and extend to me the welcome of a kind and liberal mind.

That evening, indeed, both in mental and bodily recreation, did form a delightful contrast to the

many I had lately spent in darkness and danger; and as I compared the elegant luxuries of His Excellency's table with the fare and the accommodation which had for some time been my portion, I could not help replying to some critical remark upon the excellence of a particular dish, by observing that everything was perfection to me, for that my last meal had been made on part of a tough old scorched fowl, torn joint from joint by the paws of a Tatar, and cut in pieces by the rusty, greasy knife of a Soorajee.

Farewell for the present. I shall soon write again, and tell you of what I see at this celebrated capital, and how I like it—till then adieu! You may suppose I am somewhat wearied and require rest.

LETTER IV.

The English Palace. — A Companion. — A Robbery. — Constantinople — Its situation. — Mosques and Bazars. — Streets. — Costumes. — Turkish Women. — Carriages. — Objects of interest. — "Les Ames Damnées." — Mustapha. — Sight seeing. — Slave Market. — Greek and Turkish holidays.

DEAR ——,

YOU see I soon begin the performance of my promise; and I shall commence from my present place of residence, the palace of the English ambassador at Therapia.

This is an old Turkish or Armenian house, built, like all or most in these parts, of wood, and so ill finished that every wind blows through it; so that it is the most difficult thing possible to keep it tolerably warm in winter. His Excellency has, indeed, done much to remedy these inconveniences, and has succeeded, at considerable expense, in rendering the principal apartments comfortable, and fitting them up in a very handsome manner. But the defects of the building are, in great measure, radical and irremediable; and should the comfort of the British representative at the Ottoman court be deemed a matter worthy of attention in these days

of economy, some better residence for his accommodation will assuredly require to be provided.

Formerly, the palaces of all the foreign embassies were at Pera; and there still remains upon the height overlooking the harbour, and enjoying a full view of Constantinople, a piece of ground with the stone foundation of what was the English palace, but which was burned down in the great fire at Pera some ten years ago. Its situation in the middle of the dirty town of Pera was by no means favourable to the comforts, or even to the health, of its inmates. But the ground has become so valuable, that, if sold, the price would, as I have been informed, purchase a very pretty estate, and go far to build a comfortable residence for the embassy in a more suitable situation.

The house at Therapia stands upon the brink of the Bosphorus, near the pretty village of Buyook-Dereh, and looking up towards the Black Sea, within a few miles of which it is. The rocky bank rises abruptly behind, leaving scarcely a foot of level ground about it; and the only garden it possesses, which is extremely pretty and picturesque, is cut partly out of the rock in a sort of terrace; and the spare accommodation of the palace itself consists of smaller buildings, erected on the face of the bank, to which you ascend by various flights of steps. It put me in mind of some of the country-houses I have seen in Madeira and in the West-India Islands. The worst of this confined situation is the want of all privacy in taking air or exercise out of doors which it entails upon its inmates. There are no grounds, no

walks, to resort to with the freedom which one enjoys in an extensive garden or pleasure-ground of one's own; and accordingly, when Lady Ponsonby, who is fond of exercise, feels inclined to take it, she is confined to one little bit of a walk, which is only enjoyable when the mud, which is so great a nuisance in this country, will permit.

The other modes of taking exercise or amusement are, riding on horseback, and going on the Bosphorus in a boat: for there are no such things as wheel-carriages, except the extraordinary old vehicles used by the Turkish women in Constantinople itself, — like the ragged skeletons of our earliest coaches; nor is there a mile of ground to drive them on with either comfort or safety. This want occasions great confinement to ladies, for the weather is often very cold and wet, and terrible gales of wind and rain come down from the Black Sea, which continue for several days together. So cold is it at times, that the fire-places, which have lately been constructed as much as possible on the English plan, being insufficient to warm the apartments, it becomes necessary to have recourse to the Turkish expedient of placing a great *menkel*, or brasier of charcoal, in the centre of the room, which can only answer the purpose for which it is intended at the expense of dosing its in-dwellers with a modicum of carbonic acid gas.

These annoyances may appear trifling in description, and the good folks of England, in their handsome apartments well warmed with bright coal-fires, may possibly reck little of the discomfort which

such trifles may occasion to the persons who are charged with the care of the national interests in climes so remote. But this is not, surely, as it should be; it is not just, nor liberal, nor *English*. Surely, when gentlemen, suitably qualified by rank and talents to perform duties so important, are content to quit the comforts of their own pleasant homes and country to devote themselves to the service of that country in a distant land, common justice and humanity should dictate that every attention be paid to their comfort and convenience. In summer, I believe, this part of the Bosphorus is delightful; and many of the residents at Pera contrive to escape from its dirt and evil odours, to enjoy the cool breezes of the Black Sea and the freshness of the blue straits in country-houses about Therapia and Buyook-Dereh. The foreign ministers have all their summer retreats there; and indeed, I believe, several of them — the French ambassador in particular — continue there throughout the year.

My residence at Therapia formed a delightful though brief episode in the long and weary tale of my Tatar journey; and I shall not readily lose remembrance of the polished kindness and frank hospitality that cheered the traveller on his rough way, and made him forget for a while how far he had left home and friends and country, and how long it might be ere he saw them again.

But the distance between Therapia and Constantinople, and the necessity of remaining for a few days at the latter place in order to prepare for my further journey, prevented me from availing myself

to the full of Lord and Lady Ponsonby's proffered kindness, and obliged me to establish myself at Pera, where, indeed, there was no lack of all that was hospitable and kind and good. I believe there is no British traveller who in his wanderings in this quarter has not experienced the hearty welcome and kind attention of our excellent Consul-general,—and well is it my part to confirm the general voice. In truth, my stay at Constantinople was so delightful as to render me doubly sensible to the discomforts that were awaiting me in the progress of my journey, as a bright light shining for a moment deepens the darkness that succeeds.

During this time I became acquainted with a young gentleman, Mr. Edward Bonham, who had resided for some months at Pera, on his way to Persia, whither he proposed to proceed by the way of Trebizond, but who having already suffered a good deal of inconvenience in a voyage up the Mediterranean, began to think that a Tatar journey might be better even in winter than the uncertainty of such another trip by sea. In fact, he had already had some anquaintance with the former as well as with the latter mode of travelling, having come Tatar from Tabreez to Constantinople on a former occasion; and when he proposed himself as a companion on the journey I was about to undertake, I was the more readily disposed to embrace his offer, because, independent of the comfort to be derived from society, his former experience on a route with which I was unacquainted promised to be useful; while, on the other hand, the addition of a stout

companion and another attendant, was rather to be considered as an increase of security than a means of possible detention. We therefore agreed to travel together; and suitable arrangements for this purpose were accordingly made without delay.

But although the great road through Anadoli is generally pretty free from danger, accidents sometimes do occur; and safety on such occasions is not to be always derived from the increase of one or two to the strength of a party. At Pera I met with two gentlemen who were living proofs that robberies, though unfrequent, did still sometimes occur within the best-regulated districts of Asiatic Turkey. In last October, they had set forth on the same journey which we were now to undertake. They had reached a town called Khoja Hissar without accident, and after passing the night there, had commenced the stage to Tosia, when, at a point where the road winds among thorns and brushwood in a valley which forms the bed of a river, and is rather distant from any inhabited spot, they were attacked by a party of robbers and plundered of all they had.

It appears, from their own account of the matter, that it was managed on the part of their plunderers in a neat and masterly manner, without much either of outrage or insult; on the contrary, with a degree of courtesy and forbearance, and yet of decision, that argued the existence of a premeditated and well-organised plan. The party had just passed one slight rising ground on the road, and were ascending another, when two or three horsemen passed them.

As they proceeded, several others made their appearance, to the amount (as I think) of from fifteen to eighteen more; the leader of whom turning just as he passed the Tatar, who appears to have been quite off his guard, pushed up his horse alongside, and seizing him by the body, pulled him from his seat and threw him on the ground. So little suspicion did the party entertain of an attack, that when one of the gentlemen, who related the circumstance to me, saw the robber seize hold of the Tatar, he believed it to be some friend who was embracing him. When he did comprehend the business, he clapped his hand on one of his holster pistols; but the whole party were by this time enveloped by the strangers, two of whom had ranged alongside of Captain P——, one on either hand, and one of these, with perfect civility and a little smile, put his hand on that gentleman's arm to restrain him from drawing the weapon, and, shaking his head, said, "*Olmâs—olmâs*;—" It won't do—it won't do." Of the truth of this the captain became instantly sensible, when he saw the Tatar and Soorajee on the ground in the hands of the banditti, and only himself and his friend left to fight the battle. So, wisely he permitted himself to be led unresistingly from the road into a thicket of thorns, where the robbers having forced them to descend from their horses and to lie quietly on the ground, proceeded to examine the booty. They opened the portmanteaus—took what things suited their purposes, leaving all papers, the shirts, and a coat and pair of trousers apiece, with such other articles as promised to

prove valueless to them. I understood they even asked the use of certain things which were new to them, and were guided in taking or leaving them according to the replies they received: but Captain P—— confessed that his annoyance was not small at seeing one of the fellows coolly possess himself of the very pistols which prudence had prevented his using in his own defence.

This misfortune is attributed rather to ignorance than to any imprudence of the travellers themselves. The Tatar whom they engaged to conduct them was not one of those in the regular practice of accompanying Europeans, nor, as appears, a trustworthy person. It was discovered, too, that he had taken charge of large sums of money intended for Erzeroom; a practice which all Tatars are prone to, as they receive considerable douceurs from the merchants for the transmission of cash; and those who accompany Europeans are always preferred, as the presence of these is considered a great security to the party they travel with. This money the Tatar had imprudently produced, and was seen counting it at the coffee-house (of Khoja Hissar, I think) where the party had stopped for the night, by the very fellows who committed the robbery, and who having learned by what way they were to travel, collected a force sufficient to secure the plunder.

No further violence was committed; nor was any one ill-used, except the Soorajee, whom, for what reason no one can tell, they beat within an inch of his life; after which, taking all the horses, the

thieves decamped. The plundered party, after shaking their feathers, and collecting their ideas—they had little else left to collect—made for a guard-house some two or three miles distant, where they sent for horses from Tosia. But they had got enough of the road for one while, and resolved to return to Constantinople to refit, and endeavour, if possible, to recover their lost property, or its value; and the Pashah of Tzangree, a place two or three days' journey from Tosia, in whose government the outrage was committed, advanced them money to get there. At the time I saw these gentlemen, they had been full two months returned, I think, yet no part of their property had been restored; although it afterwards came to my knowledge that the whole value, and more, had been exacted by the Sultan's order from the Pashah of Tzangree. I do not know whether *they* were ever reimbursed.

During the short time of my stay at Pera, you may be sure that I did not neglect visiting and seeing as much as possible of Constantinople,—that city of splendour and wonders, the bulwark by turns of Christianity and Islamism—the seat of the Solymans, and Selims, and Mustaphas, and Mahmoods, as well as of the Comneni and the Paleologi. You would scarcely pardon me were I to pass over such a subject, slight though my view of it must have been; and yet, after all that has been said and written about Constantinople, what can *I* say? I wish to heaven I had you here! for I am sure you would be delighted. Of all the cities and places of consequence I am acquainted with in the East, it is de-

cidedly the most *Oriental.* It puts one much more in mind of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments than any of the Persian or Indian capitals, and fills the mind more with mysterious and indefinite notions of riches and rarities, and pomp and magnificence, and princes in disguise, and harems of beauties concealed from the eye of man, and black slaves, and white slaves, and magic, and genii, and adventures of all sorts, than any of the many outlandish places I have seen.

Its situation on that beautiful arm of the sea, the finest, beyond question, in Europe, or in the world perhaps, with the thousand incidental objects of interest and points of attraction by which it is surrounded, contributes, no doubt, to the charm that fairly captivates the senses of a stranger; but the city itself — the vast extent of buildings spreading wide over rising ground and hollow, varied with majestic mosques, and minarets, and towers, and the cypresses and tombs covering so much of hill and dale,—forms a *coup d'œil* the most impressive that can be conceived from all points, but especially from the opposite coast, from Scutari, or from the waters of the bay, where the masts of the multitude of vessels are seen blended with the picturesque buildings, and adorning the scene with their white and glittering sails, and the thousands of flags and pendants with which they are always decked.

The architecture of Constantinople and its suburbs is unlike anything I have seen in the East. The tiled and low-pitched roofs of its houses are decidedly Italian; while the manner in which they

rise from the water-side, mingled with mosques and curious nondescript structures, reminds one rather of the Ghauts of a Hindoo city. In walking along its streets, and of those of Pera and Galata in particular, many places were recalled to my memory; Madeira, certain parts of the West-India Islands; Dehlee, Benares, all by turns flitted dubiously across my thoughts; but it was rather a vague and dreamy resemblance to these than any decided similarity that possessed my mind: like those fleeting images conjured up by a strain of music — by a single bar of some old ditty, which touches upon feelings of days long since gone by,—perhaps it was but the foreign aspect of the place that recalled the recollections of others nearly as strange.

The mosques are immense and picturesque quadrangular structures, differing greatly both as to general character and style of architecture from those of India or Persia; but it being the Ramazân, I could not conveniently look at the interior of any. *Inshallah*, I may have some future opportunity of describing them, and many other things which I could not possibly see at this time.

The bazars are the things I could dwell on for months,—so large, so grotesque, so filled with everything strange and attractive—so perfectly Oriental and Caliph Haroon-ul-Rasheed-ish. In particular, I would mention the Bezestein, a very large sort of caravanserai, or covered bazar, which is what might be called the fancy mart,—the Strand—the Ludgate-hill — or, perhaps, rather the Soho Bazar of Constantinople. The quantity of arms and accou-

trements, sabres, spears, old extraordinary match-locks, bows and arrows, shields, battle-axes, spears, yataghans, daggers, pistols, &c. &c. &c., with rich apparel, strange old watches, clocks, cabinets, and curiosities of all sorts, seen in the dim twilight cast by the lofty vaulted roof, and the no less various and imposing garbs of the multitude that flits through its passages or sit like statues in its stalls and shops, give to the whole place a singular air of mysterious splendour.

The other bazars are endlessly extensive; and many of the shops are really handsome, and make a great show, particularly those of the confectioners and perfumers. But before all, perhaps, are the ladies' slipper shops, of which there are whole ranges, filled with the most beautiful *papooshes*, for the delicate supporters of the fair ones of Constantinople, the elegant *fabrique* and rich embroidery of which would, I think, go far to tempt the British ladies to imitate their sisters of Islam in this particular. Then the furs and the silks, and the gorgeous arms and dresses, and glittering show of articles, which you don't understand, but which you therefore admire the more, — all this, and a thousand things unsaid, casts over the bazars of Stambol, so far as I have seen them, a charm of very remarkable interest: even the heavy aromatic smell so peculiar to Eastern countries, arising perhaps from the seasonings used in food, had its effect upon the imagination, and aided the general spell.

But the tone of the whole concern savoured far more of India than of Persia. The grey monotony

of mud walls in Persia, never could produce an effect approaching to that which the mere appearance of the buildings creates here. The streets, it is true, are narrow, with a small raised footpath of stone on each side; and the middle, though paved, is very generally ankle-deep in dirt, with a "compound of villanous odours" prevailing; for though placed on the bank of the "multitudinous" waters of the Bosphorus, Constantinople might be as well a hundred miles inland, for all the use that is made of them for purposes of cleanliness. Still, there is something in the architecture and look of the old houses in those streets, even where there is no bazar—in the curious old latticed oriel windows, heavy balconies, and overhanging roofs—a sort of Spanish-moresco air about them, that is in excellent keeping with the whole concern: you feel convinced that these great gloomy-looking structures must contain "secrets worth knowing;" a fund of untried adventures for the bold and daring—love and beauty—imprisoned maidens—bloody deeds—Bluebeard chambers, and all the rest of it, in which the imagination revels and which the curiosity pants to explore.

So much for the external aspect of the place. Then for its inhabitants,—I never saw such variety and beauty of costume:—the rich furs,—the quantity of scarlet and crimson and splendid embroidery,—the glancing of silver and gold-mounted yataghans, and swords and pistols,—the various turbans—the gay display of every colour in the rainbow, fluttering like a tulip-bed waving with the

wind, and the infinite variety of admirable and grotesque figures that pour in ceaseless crowds through these grand receptacles and avenues of commerce, and throng every street; these are what give life to the picture and invest it with so much inexhaustible attraction.

I cannot pretend to enumerate the multitude of costumes, Greek, Albanian, Armenian, Christian, Jew, Persian, Russian, and the "thousand and one" of Osmanlee origin alone,—far less to describe them; and if I did, it would convey to you no definite idea but that of tediousness and repetition:—the thing must be seen to be comprehended. The women alone—that is, the Turkish women—add but little of interest to the *tout ensemble* by their external appearance, clad as they are from head to foot in their blue envelopes with white handkerchiefs covering forehead and chin and mouth, leaving only their eyes and tip of the nose visible; and thus they flit about in their yellow boots and slippers, like walking demons or corses taking a stroll out of their graves among living mortals. I am sorry to say too, that what you do see of their features seldom excites a wish to see more. But you often see Greek girls peeping out from behind door or window, and displaying features of great beauty—appearing greater perhaps by contrast; and in Pera you see plenty of Frank women, remarkably pretty, walking about the streets, dressed exactly like those in European cities, and in the monstrous fly-away caps that were so fashionable some time ago in London, *Mashallah!* —indeed, I understand that all the Greek ladies of

these parts, beyond the walls of Constantinople proper, have almost entirely adopted the English and Parisian dress.

In fact, in spite of all this Oriental tone and brilliancy of colouring, even a stranger can perceive in this as well as in other matters the change from former habits and customs which is and has been for some time past progressing at Constantinople. Not only do the soldiery—the *Nizam*, as the newly-raised and disciplined regular troops are called, and who swarm everywhere—appear in the great-coats, jackets, pantaloons, and shoes of Europeans, but you see those articles of dress, particularly the shoes, worn by other Turks, and quantities of them ready made for sale in every shoemaker's shop. You see numbers of Franks, Greeks or Italians, or perhaps Armenians, trotting along the streets, jostling the "faithful" at every step, yet meeting with neither rebuke nor remonstrance, far less with violence;—ten years ago they would have been thrown into the gutter or the Bosphorus, or might have received a back-wipe from a yataghan, had they ventured on any such liberty. You see Franks themselves in their own dress, strutting unstared at about, and even entering the mosques uninsulted. I believe there is none except that of Sofia from which they are excluded, and to see that a firmaun is required; an indulgence never sought except for a foreign ambassador. Who that knew Constantinople twenty—nay, a dozen years ago, could have believed this would come to pass? These are but petty signs of the great moral transition which is not only

in progress here, but which has already commenced all over Asia;—straws that show which way the great monsoon of change is setting—that sweeping trade-wind which ere very long must carry Europe into Asia, break down Eastern prejudices and jealousies, assimilate the manners and wants of the people with our own, and, ultimately, with God's assistance, bear the cross more triumphantly, because bloodlessly, over realms which the sword has already vainly sought to turn to the true faith.

I wish I had you here, dear——; but it should be in a mild autumn, or in opening spring—neither in hot summer nor cold winter;—you would delight in the splendid natural and artificial scenery of this fascinating place. But then there is that horrid quarantine, to be sure; and as for going about to see things, a horse, a donkey, or a boat, are your only means of locomotion,—for, as I have told you, there are no European carriages here. Lady Ponsonby has been all through Constantinople,—streets, bazars, mosques, Seraglio and all. Through the streets and bazars she was conveyed in a strange vehicle, like those we see in penny pictures of "the lord mayor's coach," and which is used by the ladies of the great in the city. That in which her ladyship made this progress belonged to the Serasker. She was delighted, but said that ten days, instead of one, should have been devoted to it.

But boating is by far the pleasantest amusement. The city looks best from the water, because you do not then see its filth, and the white serais with their green jalousies glitter on its banks like fairy

palaces; and the multitude and variety of the vessels, from the proud man-of-war of one hundred and forty guns, down to the light felucca with its queer tall lateen sails, like a winged spider — some in motion, some at rest — some with all their sails unfurled, others dressed out in hundreds of flags, with the Bom-bom-bom of the continual salutes to his highness or his highness's flag,—keeps you in a constant state of pleasant excitement. Then there are a thousand traits of lesser interest. It is beautiful to see the little caiks flitting about like arrows over the clear waves, each, with its picturesquely-habited boatmen, and many conveying gay parties of pleasure. It is curious to watch the long-necked cormorants rising from the water to sit like images on the eaves of the houses; or to gaze on the still more statue-like stork sitting on its nest of dry sticks, which it builds on all high places. The immense number of sea-fowl are interesting and amusing; — the great gulls which sit bobbing up and down on the little dancing waves, so confident and familiar from long-experienced security, that they will scarcely rise to get out of the way of the boat or of the oar; and the white-winged divers, that sail and hover about your very head, so that you might almost knock them down with a riding-whip, and which suddenly dart like a flash of lightning into the water and bring up a struggling fish. Then there are those singular birds, which are said, I believe, to be found nowhere else, that are constantly seen flying from the Black Sea down to the Dardanelles and back again, never, as it is asserted, resting on sea or shore, and which from their restless

habits the French call "les âmes damnées,"—the damned souls. It is astonishing their multitudes and their perseverance. One morning coming from Therapia, I do believe more than fifty thousand passed me:—away they went in the greatest hurry, as if full of pressing business, down the Bosphorus; while others were returning as fast and as bootlessly. I did hear, indeed, that it is a mistake to believe that they never alight. One gentleman assured me he had seen them do so in the water; but, for the sake of consistency and keeping up the beautiful mystery that belongs to their character, I hope this is a mistake or a slander: it would be quite a pity that so poetical a story were spoiled by robbing it of its little marvel. They are birds about the size of a partridge or teal, with back, wings, and head of dusky brown,—breast, throat, and under part of the wings silver white. Some people call them the *halcyon;* but the halcyon is, I believe, a kingfisher, and the description of these birds would never agree with those lines of Scott,—

> "The little halcyon's azure crest
> Was never half so *blue.*"

Be that as it may, there is, as I have said, a good deal of doubt and mystery, and therefore of interest, attaching to them and their habitudes; and they are so highly regarded here, that to shoot or hurt them is never dreamt of. In fact, nobody seems to think of hurting any of the multitudes of sea-fowl that are constantly hovering about; and that is what renders them so tame and familiar. It is not, indeed, to the brute creation that the Turks are oppressive or

inhuman. You do not in general see them committing wanton cruelties, or guilty of that savage waste of animal life which is too common in many Christian lands; you never hear of pigeon-matches, or see multitudes of larks, linnets, sparrows, and other small birds, caught to be shot at as they escape from traps, by great big fellows in sporting-jackets, with guns that carry half a pound of dust-shot. It is only towards human life that your Turk is indifferent: he will smoke his pipe with calm composure while half a dozen heads, or hands, or noses are being cut off, or while a poor wretch is getting his toe-nails beat off and his feet bruised to a bloody mass under the bastinado; yet the same man will take care that the greatest attention be paid to his horses and cattle. He will set out food for the wild dogs of his quarter, and would almost cut off the head of any one who should maltreat them. He will rather *blow* the *crawler* which he has caught upon his person into the middle of the apartment where he sits, for the benefit of the next comer, than put it to the summary execution it would meet with from a Christian:—nay, he will feed a beggar, or throw paras by handfuls into the laps of dozens of them as he passes through the bazars; and he will build caravanserais and bridges, and expend a fortune in charitable and religious acts. "Strange inconsistency!" you will say,—and it is true; but I suspect that such inconsistency is not peculiar to the Turks, and that if we would but look at home we should find many a beam of the same sort to cast out of our own eyes.

I devoted part of three days to rambles in Constantinople; and although it was an unfavourable season,—that of the Ramazan, or Mahometan Lent, when the shops and bazars are shut up for a great part of the day,—I managed to see a good deal of the place. My first visit was made in company with some English gentlemen who had come in a very pretty yacht on a pleasure excursion up the Mediterranean; and we sallied forth to the number, I think, of seven or eight, under guidance or charge of old Mustapha, one of the Consul-general's cavasses, or messengers, and a well-known character here. Mustapha was by birth a Swiss, and how he came into his present situation in quality of a Mussulmaun, I do not quite know: it was some scrape, I believe, which he got into as a young man, and out of which he could only get again by apostatizing. He married and settled in Constantinople, and enlisted in the corps of Janissaries, that singular national guard which enslaved while it affected to protect the country and maintain the throne. He was also a Tatar in the service of the British Consul-general, a circumstance which proved his safety in the late terrible destruction of the Janissaries; and in this capacity he made some amazingly rapid journeys, among which perhaps the most remarkable was one from Constantinople to Demavund, a place about sixty miles beyond Tehran, where the British Envoy was residing,—that is, very near two thousand miles in all,—which he accomplished in seventeen days, bearing the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba.

Mustapha was likewise frequently selected to ac-

company English travellers on their trips through the Turkish territories, as he had picked up so much of the English language as to render himself particularly serviceable; indeed, he speaks it now with remarkable fluency; and the mixture of Turkish and English phraseology jumbled together in the latter gives a raciness to the discourse of old Mustapha which renders it very amusing. He has now, however, descended into the vale of years, and has given up travelling in person, but still is delighted to undertake expediting the arrangements of others for their Tatar trip. He has got one or two sons-in-law, who are in the same service, and deservedly esteemed as good Tatars; and I can conscientiously recommend old Mustapha to those who meditate such an exploit, as one who will give them the best advice, and rig them out in the most approved and comfortable fashion for their journey.

Under this worthy guide, then, did we griffins sally forth, like so many sheep trotting after the bell-wether: and though, as I have said, Mustapha is somewhat advanced in years, it is a green old age, and had, I can assure you, in no degree affected the strength or agility of his legs. On he stumped, Tatar fashion, threading the narrow streets and crowded bazars at such a rate that we could not for our lives keep up. Indeed, we by no means approved of such speed, as, like all strangers, we wanted to halt every now and then, and stare about us; and the old boy was ever and anon forced to bring up and look back, and wait to collect his flock, who were all running astray, like wicked animals,

after their own devices. Out of the Bezestein it was almost impossible to move us the first day, though the people were just closing it; and we lost the sight at the time of several other bazars by it. But to one place Mr. Mustapha insisted on taking us; and that was to a perfumer's shop—some Mehemet or Mustapha, or something, perfumer, as he calls himself, to the Seraglio; and though his magazine might not in extent quite equal Mr. Atkinson's or Delcroix's, I can assure you, that in neatness of arrangement and profusion of odours, and a display of elegant gimcrackery, it would have made no despicable figure in the Burlington Arcade, or Soho Bazar. Here were all manner of *uttrs* and *arruks*, and oils, and soaps, and pastes, and pomatums, and phials, and boxes; and here you may at all times procure, at about three times their value, the trifles, such as bracelets, and purses, and bandeaus, &c. &c., made of the sweet-scented Seraglio paste, which seems to be a compound of musk and sandal-wood dust, and other perfumed substances. There is also a back shop, into which you are requested to walk and partake of coffee, and pipes, and lemonade, which are always served in very good style to the visiters of this emporium of fashion; and there are to be seen a profusion of curiosities, handsome sabres, daggers, pieces of armour, and dress, and appurtenances of all sorts, warlike and pacific, hung up, or scattered about, as traps to catch the stranger's coin; and it is seldom one returns from this amusing repository without a diminution of his coin, and the acquisition, at a

considerable ransom, of some glittering or curious trifle. On this occasion we all purchased something; nor had friend Mehemet any reason to consider his coffee and sherbet, or his politeness, thrown away.

All agog for adventure, and the sight of beauty, black, brown or white, we visited the slave market, where of yore so many, and often such lovely caged captives were disposed of like beasts of burthen; but we were utterly disappointed here. I think there were one or two negro boys, black as jet, with lips like sausages, and noses like abortions of a wart, who courted the attention of purchasers with hideous grinning smiles. The beauties, if any there were, were not of course exposed except to such as came on purpose to buy, and of that number of course we unbelieving Giaours could not be. But the supply of beauty from Circassia and Georgia has sadly diminished since the Turks have lost these countries, which are now in the hands of or blockaded by that highly-civilized and most merciful Christian prince, the Autocrat of all the Russias; and the faithful followers of the Prophet must be content to provide themselves with their legitimate complement of wives from among the charms of Greece or Turkey, or pay a most exorbitant ransom for the few female captives who are fetched by stealth from the Caucasian provinces.

The fast of Ramazan being only a Mahometan one, the Armenians, Greeks, and Jews are less influenced by it than the Turks, and keep their shops longer open: and to be sure, of these same Armenians, in their dark robes and great globe-shaped black wool caps, what numbers there were!

and all so like one another—so fat, white, *pastey*, swoln—so unhealthy-like: yet so quick in matters of business, so alert if you appear to want anything, yet so hard at a bargain; so ready to show, yet so sticklish about price in selling; grasping at every passer-by; just like the Jews in Monmouth-street, and not very dissimilar to some of our Christian shopkeepers in those respects. Then the crowds of Turkish women, with their shroud-like dresses, and all so ugly,—I beg pardon—*plain*, I believe, is the word, when applied to the sex; not a decent feature to show—to give promise of better things concealed; all were high-featured, and all were ashy pale,—just the proper corse-like complexions to suit their lugubrious dresses. A great proportion, it is true, were past the prime of life; and charity led me to hope that most of the young and beautiful were kept at home, and only the old and—*plain* permitted to go abroad.

I might gossip on in this way about Constantinople and its beauties, or its oddities, long enough, for letter after letter; but you must remember we are travelling Tatar, and such lengthy halts are quite inadmissible on Tatar journeys. My preparations have not been neglected, however, although the season is very adverse to business. Not only is it the Ramazan of the Turks, but the New Year's holiday time of the Greeks. The first are all fasting and sulking—the last all feasting, and drinking, and gadding about; so a little after noon every shop is shut, and the people all go to the mosques, or to sleep, or to amuse themselves, as each man pleases;

and then, be your need ever so great, not a thing is to be got, not a step to be moved. It is a splendid place for losing time; you would swear that the "dolce far niente" was the moving, or rather the passive spirit of the people; yet catch them on a working-day and at working-hours, and, Heaven knows, there is no deficiency of sharpness, or activity, or worldly wisdom among them.

Farewell, dear ——! My next will tell you of having commenced my journey, though from whence it may be dated time alone can show; I should hope, from Erzeroom,—where, if we have good luck and find the roads tolerable, we should arrive in about twelve days,—at a better season we might do it in nine. Adieu.

LETTER V.

Travelling arrangements. — Personal equipment. — " Provant"— Cemetery of Scutari. — Ismid Sabanja. — Wooden bridge.—A tumble. — Disappointment. — Duscheh. — Boli. — Cold ride to Gheriza. —Hamamlee.—Nervous paths.—A hard night's work. —Kajah Hissar.—Tosia. — Hajee-Humza.—Surmâs-e-Kiayah. —Osmanjik. — A pass. — A bitter night. — Marsteewan. — Amasia.—Tocat.—Niskar.—Ascent to Armenia.—Kooli-Hissar. —Kara-Hissar.—A severe stage.—Chifflik.—Armenian houses. —Characteristic scenes. — Elma-Dagh. — Loree.—Kara.—Koulah. — A Koordish village. — Thieves. — Ash-Kallah. — Reach Erzeroom.

Commenced at Amasia, and continued on to Erzeroom. February.

WELL, DEAR ——, Here we are so far, struggling with vile roads and buffeted by vile weather, yet in capital condition, that is,—travelling condition; for we have all of us got quit of most of our superfluous fat. But *commençons par le commencement.* It was the 15th of January before my business was finished, and all arrangements for our journey completed. Among the last was the engagement of a servant to accompany us, and it had given more trouble in proportion to its importance than any other. We were resolved to push on night and day without halting, except to change horses; and to get a man with stamina to support such exertion, and yet be ready to act as a servant—look after our luggage, prepare

our food, and assist the Tatar in seeing everything properly ordered, immediately on alighting from his horse at each station or coffee-house, was obviously no easy matter. It was difficult, indeed, to find a man who would undertake such duty; and we might have known, from personal feelings and experience, that to discharge it satisfactorily was out of the power of any man. I would, in fact, recommend any traveller whose evil stars lead him to undertake a long *Tatar* journey, in the true sense of the phrase, that is, travelling night and day without stopping, and particularly if it be in winter, just to trust to the Tatar and Soorajees, and postmaster's servants, whom he finds on the way—to be content with what he can get and bear what he must suffer; for he may depend upon it, that his comfort will not be increased by the attendance of a servant, whom he will ten to one have to leave half-way, or to nurse the whole of it.

After various disappointments and delays, on the 16th January we found ourselves prepared; and having bid adieu to our most kind and hospitable friends at Pera and Therapia, we committed ourselves and baggage to the care of our Tatar, and by ten o'clock in the forenoon landed at Scutari, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. Our company consisted of Mr. Bonham and myself, Mehemet Aga, Tatar, one of old Mustapha's sons-in-law, and two Soorajees, with three baggage-horses, and our servant, an Armenian, a native, I think, of Selmas in Azerbijan, whither he was desirous of returning under our protection. This required nine horses; for as no Soorajee is per-

mitted to take charge of more than five horses, we were obliged to provide ourselves with two of these worthies; and we found in the sequel not only abundant use for this extra functionary, but reason rather to regret the want of more hands than to grudge the number we had. Indeed, after making every effort to lighten our baggage,—and it was actually much lighter than my own had been on the road from Semlin,—it proved heavy enough for the state of the roads and the inclemency of the season. Yet we limited ourselves as much as possible even in point of necessaries—of conveniences we had scarcely any.

My own equipment was, however, somewhat improved in point of compactness from its state when I left Semlin. Taught by experience, I had made further provision against the cold. Two pair of stockings, one of fleecy hosiery such as gouty subjects wear, and the other of large thick worsted, covered my lower extremities; and over these were drawn the thick Tatar stockings and large boots I had already found so useful. I had cut down my Turkish shulwars to a more manageable size; and they, with cotton and chamois-leather drawers, besides a pair of English cloth pantaloons, bid fair to guarantee my lower man from the nipping blasts. That chamois-leather forms an excellent protection for the traveller, for it assists greatly in keeping out the wind, which, after all, is his worst enemy in cold weather; but it should be worn above the ordinary flannel, and not, as some persons have erroneously imagined, next the skin: indeed, it is best, as I believe, over flannel, shirt, and all: but wear it

as they will, I should strongly recommend those who are likely to be exposed to much cold never to be without it. A stout flannel-lined long-skirted riding-coat, and a fur cloak,* or rather gown, which I had procured at Frankfort, promised well for excluding the enemy from the "nobler parts," as they are called, including, I presume, that important organ the stomach, to "keep the cold out of" which, by a liberal internal application of *cordial drops*, is the zealous business of many a good old gentleman and lady at home. But as my furs alone would have made a poor defence against rain or falling snow, I had provided myself with a good *Mackintosh* India-rubber cloak, which now did worthy service. My upper works were guarded by a travelling fur cap, and sundry shawls and wrappers were at hand to comfort ears and nose in case of need.

I cannot say much for the elegance of this costume, which was rather useful than ornamental. That of my companion was infinitely more tasteful; for he wore a regular smart Persian cap and *kuleejah*, or fur riding-jacket, with shulwars nearly as wide as mine, and splendidly embroidered Tatar stockings, falling with much theatrical grace over his wide boots. Both of us were begirt with swords,—mine an old Indian friend, my companion in many a long and perilous ride; and both had capital double holster pistols, with a "pocket companion" of the same description: so that a more truculent-

* By-the-by, the fur was of Astracan lamb-skin, which is heavy and by no means very warm. Racoon, or wolf, or fox-skins are much better for the purpose.

looking, purpose-like pair, I will answer for it, have seldom strode along the dirty streets of Pera on a post-horse-slaying expedition.

A lively recollection of the customary Tatar fare induced us to guard against the chances of starvation, by providing a couple of drums of capital figs, an excellent, wholesome and nutritive sort of food, by munching which one may amuse oneself profitably and agreeably in riding along. And our good friend the Consul had taken care that we should not want for the first few days, by filling our provision-bag with some capital fowls, tongues, &c. &c., and a couple of bottles of old brandy—by all which we soon were glad to profit: but of that anon. I had myself taken care to lay in a good store of *tea*, which, after all, is the first of comforts to a traveller in the way of cordial.

Were I again to prepare for such an expedition, I would take with me a little of Fry's chocolate, which is grated down in a moment. The Cahwajee can always furnish boiling water, and milk is generally to be had in Turkey; you take your own sugar; and thus a capital warm mess is prepared in ten minutes with scarcely any trouble. Portable soup, if really good of its kind and well flavoured, is also a good thing; but it always requires seasoning, or onions, or something or another, to render it palatable, which costs time and trouble; and time and trouble are the things of all others which you can worst afford to throw away on a real Tatar trip. If you are nice, I would recommend a small pot or two of anchovy paste, to relish the abominable moist

black bread you often get; but to the real rough-and-ready traveller, his tea, chocolate, and the eggs he can generally get, and some figs in case of want or hunger on a long stage, are all he need care about. A vessel of some sort for boiling his tea or chocolate he will find necessary, and a cup to drink it from. I prefer for the first a mere skellet, or copper machine like a common coffee-pot, with a lid to it, to anything in the shape of a tea-pot, or bachelor's kitchen, or any or all of those troublesome conveniences which are recommended to travellers for their various uses and great compactness. I had myself a "Hall's kitchen," a wonderfully snug collection of various skellets and coffee apparatus, with a lamp for boiling the water, and so called by Mr. Jones of the Strand from some improvement suggested in its organization by our friend Captain Basil Hall. I used it just twice, once to cook portable soup, and once for making tea; but the trouble of taking it to pieces and putting it up again, which I was forced to do when I should have been resting, was so great that we preferred wanting our soup to having it at such an expense. It was stolen from me some time afterwards, and I never missed it; indeed, the loss was rather a blessing, as it relieved my conscience from the load of having so convenient a utensil without ever using it.

But some vessel for boiling water in the traveller should have, as such a thing is not always to be had even in the coffee-houses; and there might be one or two drinking-cups fitted into it: the whole machine, being popped into a leather case, should find its place in the provision bag, and be carried by the

Soorajee. In that bag may also be put whatever cold meat you have, the case with your knives and forks and spoons (two of each), some sugar, and the articles generally required at every halting-place. You can have it under padlock and key; and there should be a standing order to have it brought to you regularly as you dismount at each post, and take up your seat in the coffee-house.

But, in addition to this, the traveller should always have his own small pair of saddle-bags behind him, also under lock and key, in which he can stow such matters as he finds it convenient to have always at hand, and does not wish to trust to the Soorajee. It is a great point in travelling to learn to make your carriage, or your horse, according to the case, your house—that everything about you should have its place, so that it may instantly be found at hand when wanted. It is the only way to prevent continual losses: I had my saddle fitted with two sets of saddle-bags. Those behind were the largest, and in them I bestowed the tea required for daily use, such knives and instruments as were likely to be required, a shawl for my head at night, my sketch-book, &c. &c. Those in front, which hung just before the holsters and were very small, I found convenient for popping my handkerchief, spare gloves, memorandum-book, and journal into, with ink, pencils, and such trifles as were in hourly use; for when wrapped up with many clothes and pelisses, it is not always easy to find the way to a pocket, and I have often endured the want of an article rather than stop and disarrange the whole economy of my person to get at it.

In spite of all these most admirable arrangements, as you must allow them to sound, you may conceive my dismay and mortification when, upon arriving at Scutari, and mustering our riding gear in order to prepare the horses, I found that my saddle had neither girths, stirrup-leathers, nor irons! I had given the concern to a saddler in Pera to be fitted up as above described, and probably the man, when he set to work upon the saddle, had taken off these loose appendages, and had forgotten to replace them when he sent it home to me; while I, on my part, seeing that the improvements were all right, had looked no further, and so was left in the lurch. There was nothing for it but to send back our servant Yacoob to Pera with a note to our friend the Consul, and to wait his return with what patience we might.

My carelessness cost us a delay of nearly four hours, during which we sat kicking our heels in the post-house at Scutari. It gave us, however, an opportunity of viewing the secrets of a Turkish post-house on a large scale, and to judge of the sort of cattle we should probably have to trust to for a ride of some fifteen hundred miles. As we sat on a bench at the gateway, the whole drove of post-horses, about sixty in number, were turned out to water, under a strong detachment of Soorajees; such carrion!—half of them exhibiting specimens of lameness in every possible shape and degree, many scarcely able to crawl, and all of them galled—ugh!—*so* galled on back, and sides, and belly, that it made one's own skin creep to look at them. There was not one of

them, you would have sworn, able to carry a load a mile, so lean did they appear, so little and so jaded: but, such as they were, when my man arrived with rigging for my saddle, furnished by the good Consul himself, nine of them were brought to us, their sores and imperfections covered with their own ragged felts and our saddles; our baggage was hoisted upon the poor backs of the wincing bat-horses, and hauled taut after the manner of Soorajees, — a very effectual one, by the way — cruel strong, and clumsy; — we stowed ourselves each upon our nag, shook ourselves into our seats; up went the Tatar; "Yah ullah!" exclaimed the head Soorajee; "Allah-e-ullah!" roared the Tatar; and off we set, to the usual chorus of clattering and blows.

What an impressive, gloomy, interminable burying-ground is that of Scutari, through which we rode for miles, the white marble tombstones—they are mostly of marble — gleaming from under the black-green shade of the vast cypress forest! Many of the grave-stones are gaudily sculptured with gilt letters, and on some are painted cypress-trees and other devices, which remind one of the tawdry tinsel-spangled robes you sometimes see covering the poor old bones of some saint in the Catholic churches abroad, or like rouge and pearl-powder on the face of a shrivelled sexagenary beauty. The road through this melancholy wood was crowded with passengers, and parties of pleasure as it seemed, connected no doubt in some way with the feasting and fasting of the season; and we saw some fine mosques and

a large barrack or two on our right-hand through the openings of the trees. It was a relief when we emerged from the shadows of this valley of death, and saw before us the shining Sea of Marmora, with its beautiful islands, and Mount Olympus in the distance, towering over all the intervening highlands. The evening was fine, the air exhilarating, and the sun cast a bright red glow over the pleasing country through which we trotted merrily on; but darkness overtook us long before we entered Gheriza, where we were to change horses, and which we entered at ten at night. The lamps which shone in crowns and clusters round the illuminated minarets* impressed us with the idea that Gheriza was a considerable place; and the appetites which our ride had given us whispered a hope of good cheer, which was wofully disappointed. Not an article of any kind could the Tatar hunt out for us to eat: it was the *Ramazan,* they said; people ate little, and only at sunset;—so the feast was over, and little recked they who feasted or fasted after it. Fortunately, it did not quite come to fasting with us; for we got hold of a fine Adrianople smoked tongue, which, with bread and good coffee, afforded us no despicable meal.

The night proved changeable, and close for the season; sometimes dark as pitch, then bright, and then again all gloom. The roads were desperately deep in mud, and towards morning a soaking rain began to fall; but we clattered on, spattering each

* A custom in Mahometan countries during the Ramazan, which has a very imposing effect in a dark night.

other with our horses' heels until we were all quite be-plastered with mud, and entered Ismîd, the ancient Nicomedia, at half-past eight of the next morning. Nothing can be more picturesque than the site and appearance of this town, with its curious old tenements, rising high as they do from the very shore of its beautiful gulf, up the side of a steep mountain, in terraces and ridges and ravines, all surrounded and clustered with vineyards and orchards and fruit-trees, and with its most wild and interesting burying-grounds and old cypresses in the heart of the city. I fear the streets must be excepted from the praise I have bestowed upon the general aspect of Ismîd; unless, indeed, the grotesque variety of shape and direction that characterizes them may entitle them to rank among its picturesque features. Knee-deep in mud they were, and paved after a fashion which you would have sworn was intended to break horses' legs.

We broke our fast at this place on a few eggs fried in butter, and then, having crossed some pretty full streams, pushed on for several miles along an ancient causeway, a strong and lasting work, but desperately bad for horses' feet. Our road then lay up a beautiful broad valley of rich loamy soil, covered with dwarf holly-leaved oak, thorns, brambles, and a species of furze. The lofty mountains on either side, particularly to the right, were covered to their tops with forests of oak, and crowned with mist. The weather loured and threatened exceedingly, but the rain ceased, and, in spite of heavy roads and mud girth-deep, we reached the curious

village of Sabanjah, with its noble trees of ilex and plane, just twenty-four hours from Constantinople, — that is, a little after three in the afternoon. This was but a poor day's work; but mud is a fatal obstacle to speed, especially with such miserable cattle as we had. Nor did the accounts given us of what lay before us afford much cause of comfort: to every inquiry of "How are the roads towards Boli?" the reply was always, "*Châmoor tchowk, tchelebee, châmoor tchowk; yâmoor tchowk—châmoor tchowk:*" i. e. "Plenty of mud, sir; a great deal of mud; plenty of rain and mud." And so sure enough it proved.

About four o'clock in the afternoon we left Sabanjah, which, built in a perfect jungle at the foot of a mountain, put me in mind of Mazunderan, and our route led us for the first six miles along the margin of the lake of that name,—indeed, for a great part of the way through the water itself, which, although the scenery was interesting, was far from pleasant as night approached. The causeway already mentioned extends all along this line of road, but is so much broken up and damaged in many places, that the Soorajees prefer picking their own way across the country and through the fields, whatever the weather may be. After leaving the lake, we splashed along extensive plains, covered in some parts with brushwood of ilex, thorns, and other bushes—in others divided into fields, all soaked with water or deep with mud. At five we took coffee at a wooden bridge which crosses the broad and deep river of Sacaria, and then had a most weary

seven hours' tramp across the same sort of wet plains, and partly along the causeway. In one place the whole surface was under water, a deep and perfect swamp, formed, I believe, by the overflow of the river Sacaria; and this we crossed by a wooden bridge or causeway of plank, some two or three miles in length, exceedingly crazy and dangerous, under which we could hear — it was too dark to see — several streams running; no pleasant matter, with such cattle, or any cattle, in a night which was as black as a wolf's mouth.

This wooden affair, which I think they call the Ouzunkupri, is no doubt a modern repair of the old causeway, which had probably given way at this place; for by it we reached the bridge, and rejoined it at the termination of the wooden planks. Along the causeway we then trotted for a good way; a source of danger, as I experienced, for my nag in one place lost his footing on the stones, stumbled, and recovered, — stumbled again, and with the double impetus came down, rolling half over me, and then luckily parting company, so that we both lay separate, but very much stunned, upon the pavement. The shock was pretty severe, and one leg and knee were sharply bruised; but, I believe, after all, the principal injury was sustained by my unlucky air-pillow, which I had put upon my saddle, and which now receiving a hug between the rough causeway and some sharp point of the animal's back, was taken up anything but air-tight. It was past twelve at night when we reached our stage, Khendack, wet to the skin, and covered with

a perfect coating of mud,—and so hungry, that we resolved to wait for three hours to dry ourselves and have a good pillaw cooked. So, having divested ourselves of our outer garments and given orders for the viands, we lay down, not unwillingly, to sleep.

Day had dawned before the Tatar roused us, in spite of his oft-reiterated promises of alertness; and on asking for our pillaw and victuals, we were informed that they "were not"—none to be had. This was too intolerable. "What! no pillaw?" "*Pillaw yôkdur;*" "There is no pillaw." "Eggs then." "*Yemoorteh yòkdur;*" "There are no eggs,—it is the *Ramazan.*" And such was everywhere the reply; nor, except at Ismîd, where the Tatar ferreted out a few eggs and some little fruit, could we procure a single meal. Let no one possessing the common appetites of man travel post in Turkey during the Ramazan; nor let him put faith in Tatars that promise him good eating. If he knows what good eating means, he must know that he is deceiving you; if not, you are not the less taken in, and given over to starvation.

We were angry, as men a hungered might well be, at what we could not help thinking our leader's carelessness; and we blustered, as well as we could, in fierce attempts at Turkish phrases, endeavouring, by angry words and angry signs, to demand what he supposed these same Turks themselves had to feed upon when gunfire in the evening gave lawful loose to the cravings of their stomachs. But the reply, though doubtless conveyed in very pure and con-

vincing Turkish, failed to reach our apprehension, and all we made out of it was that Khendek could furnish us nothing.

Pulling out, therefore, some few remaining bones of a fowl, and bolting sundry figs with the pickings thereof, we once more mounted, on the morning of January 18th, and commenced a frightful stage of mud and bog, over a series of low hills and rising grounds, covered with oak forest. In fact, the whole country round us was now covered with wood—mountains, hills, valleys, and all. These hills were all composed of a deep light earth, a perfect sponge for water, and into which the horses plunged often shoulder-deep. I never saw worse or more devious and difficult roads: it put me in mind of some of the worst parts of Ghilan. Little rock of any sort was visible, and that little was calcareous.

At five hours, or twenty miles, we stopped at a caravanserai, on the banks of a stream, from whence we rode on through a lovely plain of rich deep soil, divided into fields and enclosures, and thickly interspersed with rows and clumps and groves of fine old walnuts, and orchards of other fruit-trees. It was a sweet smiling country, although the mountains around were covered with snow; and there were strong evidences of its having been a place of note in ancient times, for fragments of columns and other ruins were frequent, and the burying-grounds, old or new, had for their tomb-stones pieces of square or cylindrical columns, many of which bore inscriptions which we could not stop to examine.

In the course of our trot through this plain, the Tatar took offence at one of the Soorajees, on whom, after discharging sundry broadsides of abuse, he proceeded to vent his wrath in the shape of a sound horsewhipping. But Soorajee, who saw no fun in biding the pelting of that storm, set off at full tilt; and after him scoured the Tatar in chace. It was in vain, however, for the rogue knew his own strength—he was far the best mounted, and we saw no more of him till we reached our next stage, Duscheh, where he arrived some time afterwards, and found some means or other of making his peace.

From Duscheh, after a very slight meal and changing horses, we commenced a long and toilsome stage of forty miles to Boli. Our first outset was a scour along the remainder of the place I have spoken of, through much tangled oak and thorn jungle, crossing and recrossing the stream which flows through it, till by nightfall we entered a defile clothed with thick and lofty forest. At the foot of the first ascent, we alighted,—

> "Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
> And loosen'd in its sheath the brand;"

that is, we put ourselves and our horses and the loads to rights, and got everything into the best possible trim for climbing the long and weary pass that lay before us.

Here snow and we first shook hands, to part company but little for a long time. It increased as we ascended, till it became so deep and tough, that at one time I thought we were coming to a stand-still altogether. In fact, we missed the

road, following some stray track; and after a good deal of hard work and tumbling about in the snow, and all but knocking up the horses, we were forced to try back, and recovered our way with great difficulty.

The forest through which we passed consists of oak and beech-trees of great height, and growing so close together as to admit of little underwood; what there is appeared to be either rhododendron or laurel —chiefly the former, I suspect,* for the leaves glistened in the moonlight, which, however, was not clear enough to enable us to distinguish the species with any certainty. The ascent in some places was steep and laborious, in others more gradual. Skeletons of horses, well picked by the wolves, gave token of its having proved fatal to some unhappy beasts of burthen; and one carcass, as yet only half-devoured, lay in our very track: it seemed ominous to the living carrion we ourselves were bestriding.

After ascending the pass, we kept traversing a forest of beech and hornbeam, along an elevated and more level tract, deep in snow, and bitterly bleak and cold, until we reached a sort of miserable guard-house on the top of the mountain. It was a striking scene which the moon shone forth upon, as it broke fitfully from among the heavy clouds: the tall peaks and huge mountains that rose on all sides, though deep, deep in snow, were fringed and wooded to the very tops; but all was fixed and still as death—an icy hand seemed to be laid on every object, as if Nature herself had retired to a six months'

* I believe it was altogether rhododendron.

nap, like the hibernating animals. The cold had increased exceedingly as we ascended; and by the time we reached the guard-house, the mud-splashings of the former stages, by which we had been wetted through, had frozen into a solid cake of ice as rigid as a board. Our boots, which in our flounderings in the snow had gathered a large quantity, were like boxes of steel, and frozen fast to the stirrup-irons, so that we could not dismount until they were knocked out of them, and then we could hardly walk: and all our caps and shawls were clotted, with our mustachios, into lumps of ice by our breath and the rime of the snow-dew. You may judge of the state of our extremities.

At this place we took coffee, and then pushed on over a road much like glass for Boli, which we reached about an hour after midnight, half dead with cold and fatigue. But every creature was snug in his nest, so that it was very difficult to rouse them at all; and when we did, we could scarcely get fire to warm us. In fact, the scanty exhibition of heat which we did manage to procure did us more harm than good, for it half-thawed our frozen clothes, and left us so wet and cold, that I could not get a wink of sleep during the three hours we stayed at Boli. After much delay we got a pillaw, made with rancid butter, to comfort us, and about four in the morning of January 19th, we mounted again, the moon now shining brightly, the clouds having passed away, and commenced the next stage of twelve hours, or forty-eight miles, to Gheriza.

I scarcely ever remember to have suffered more

from cold than during this morning's ride along the extensive plain of Boli: for, chilled as we had been by our wet clothes of the preceding night, which froze again into stiff armour as we took the road, we had no stock of vital heat to support the cutting air of the deadly hours before daybreak; while the road was so rough and bad, from frozen snow and ice, that we could not trot our horses nor walk ourselves. Indeed, the horses suffered yet more severely as the morning broke; for the crust of mingled mud and snow not being always able to support their weight, they cut their heels and legs terribly by breaking through it.

The village of Gheriza, to which our road, after quitting the plain of Boli, lies among hills covered with oak and pine-trees, and across one or two smaller plains, is picturesquely situated in a hollow among hills and on the banks of a wild stream: but all was snow and ice when we were there — huge icicles hung in thick rows from every house-top—and we had little temptation to look after the beauties of the place. Indeed, we had no time; for, mounting again the fresh *rats* that were brought us with more than ordinary despatch, off we set for Hamamlee.

The previous severe stage and bad road had consumed so much of our day, that the light was beginning to fail as we left Hamamlee; which, as there were several lofty heights to cross, all covered with deep snow, and some very ugly steps winding along the brink of precipices, was anything but pleasant: but one does not travel Tatar for pleasure—so on we went. Bitter, bitter blew the wind as we

mounted our steeds, and rode down the rising ground on which the town is placed, not far from the gorge of a long deep valley: and so fierce did the blast come down as we entered the gorge, that we could scarcely keep our cloaks, or our horses their legs. Our garments soon, indeed, became rigid enough with the small drifting snow that began to fall; but the danger of the path made us less sensible to the cold, for it wound, with the most uncomfortable familiarity, along the ledges of very high and rocky precipices, and ran zig-zag up the face of braes, with gulfs below them that looked unfathomable in the darkness; certainly, they were many hundred feet deep, and more than once the scenery must have been very grand, if we could judge by the imperfect glimpses we obtained of it in darkness. But, I confess, the real danger of scrambling over the slippery ice-covered rocks, and getting ourselves or our baggage dashed to pieces by a fall over the horrid precipices, took wonderfully from my enjoyment of the picturesque; and often, in spite of the cold, did I feel the perspiration start from my pores, as the horses' feet slipped where a slip might have been fatal.

To add to our annoyances, the Tatar, who had picked up a companion by the way, together with that companion and the head Soorajee, got drunk upon a bottle of my brandy, which had been broken, and which, having no means of preserving, I had directed to be thrown away. These worthies thought that it might be turned with advantage to another use, and pretty pickles they made themselves with

it. Scarcely had we cleared the pass when all three fell fast asleep, and there was no keeping them awake for two minutes together; so Bonham and I had to flog on the load-horses all night through the snow,—an occupation which, though exercise might be advisable, was by no means of the most pleasant description.

A sad, weary, and anxious night it was, indeed; for when we ascended from the valley to the higher grounds, the sky became so impenetrably thick from small drifting snow, that we could not distinguish the very ground we trod upon, and were obliged to go on at a venture, trusting to the sagacity of the horses for smelling out their way. Our whole persons were incrusted with ice,—face, hair, beard, mustachios, and all our head-gear, matted into a tissue of icicles; and so miserable was our condition from cold and anxiety, and real danger too, that we resolved to halt at the first khan or building that might present itself, till morning dawn.

But to resolve was one thing; to execute, another. The first khan we came to was deserted, empty, — neither food, fuel, nor water to be had, and very imperfect shelter. This would not do at all; so we pushed on some miles further, till we found another fine large-looking walled building, which we understood to be a khan, though it turned out to be the village of Chirkesh: but though there were abundant proofs of its being inhabited, no eloquence of ours, or roaring and thundering of the two Tatars at the gate, could effect an entry; not a soul would approach the gate, or give an answer; all,

no doubt, were snug in their warm beds. So, after losing a miserable half-hour in these vain attempts, we were forced to push on three hours, or twelve miles further to Karajolan, where we arrived about half-past four in the morning, almost frozen to death, and tumbled, ice and all, upon the first mat or mattress we could find, and slept, in spite of everything, from perfect exhaustion.

Stiff, sore, and still reeking-wet, we were roused at seven in the morning of the 20th by the Tatar, who, ashamed, I suspect, of his last night's pranks, had contrived to provide us with an excellent breakfast of warm rice and milk, fried eggs, and a dish of stewed meat, the only good meal we had obtained at a post-house since leaving Constantinople; it warmed the very cockles of our half-frozen hearts. We were on horseback by eight, and in spite of the snow, which covered the whole surface to a great depth, cantered and trotted the next stage of three hours, or twelve miles, in good style. Its shortness accounts for the goodness of the horses found upon it.

The country from leaving Gherizah had lost its wooded character, and we had now attained a very considerable degree of elevation. The nature of the soil was rich loam in downs, with earthy hills, exhibiting but little rock except in the pass of the preceding night; but the depth of snow prevented any accuracy of observation. We passed a number of Greek or Armenian tombs, the remains of ancient cemeteries, many of them columnar, and bearing Greek inscriptions, which, of course, we could not halt to read.

Our next stage of eight hours, or thirty-two miles, led us down a long steep pass to a fine valley, along which we made our way with some difficulty, from mingled mud and snow, to Cojah-Hissâr, a nice-looking town upon a rising ground, just at the foot of a range of singular earthy hills, cut into numberless ravines; beyond which rose a chain of lofty mountains. Some of these hills were gravelly, with strata of conglomerate rock. On proceeding from hence, we struck into these gravelly hills, by a fine deep valley, the former all sprinkled with trees of *arbor vitæ* and a sort of juniper, the latter covered with tufts of the *rosa horrida* and other thorns. It was on this stage, three hours from the village, that the gentlemen of whom I wrote you from Constantinople were robbed; and as we plunged into the same desert tract, you may suppose we examined our arms and looked about us with some little anxiety: but neither thief nor robber did we see, nor anything to disturb us, as we ascended the valley and crossed a tract of irregular hills, from the other side of which we saw the beautiful undulated plain of Tosia, with its handsome town picturesquely situated on the side of a hill surrounded with other heights, and overlooking a rich, well-cultivated valley. In spite of snow and frost, it was a fair scene, as viewed by the bright moonlight; and had it been day, and had I had time, I should have been tempted to spend an hour in sketching it. As matters were, although the night was mild compared with the two preceding ones, and the stage altogether less fatiguing than many we had travelled, a three hours'

rest at the post-house,—which time, we were told, would be required to get us horses,—was by no means an unwelcome prospect.

As usual, the three hours, by the carelessness of the Tatar or the faithlessness of the Soorajees, became five, and it was six in the morning of the 21st ere we were again mounted to proceed, in the teeth of a thick snow-storm.

I got a sharp lesson on this stage to look after my own riding-gear before mounting. Finding before I had gone two miles that my stirrip-leathers were of unequal lengths, I stopped and dismounted to put the matter to rights. This operation was so much to the distaste of my nag—a wonderfully skittish young thing for a Turkish poster, that I had the greatest difficulty in performing it, and in eluding the sundry kicks and tosses of the animal, which, naturally enough disliking the storm, would fain have turned tail to it and set off homeward. To mount him, hampered as I was with clothes and wrappings, was a yet more ticklish job; and after this was effected, by means of a lucky 'vantage-ground near the road-side, I should not have known which of the many tracks leading among heights and hollows, among snow-wreaths and drifts, to take in order to rejoin my party, had not the Tatar by some accident looked back, and, missing me, turned and relieved me from my dilemma.

We crossed many earthy hills, cut up into curious ravines and punch-bowl like hollows, all covered with the same shrubs as before; but higher up were scattered trees of a pine resembling the common Scotch fir, with larger trees of the *arbor vitæ*. We crossed

several large streams, until at length, after a good eight hours' stage, we came down upon the Kizzil Ermâk, or a branch of it, in the valley of which was one breakfasting post, Hajee-Humza, a fortified and highly picturesque town, built upon a height overlooking the stream. Here again my fingers itched to sketch,—to transfer to paper the romantic valley, which, with its wood and enclosures and cultivation, had a tempting aspect of civilized life:—but, alas, alas! we were posting, and it was snowing! The mountains that enclosed this pleasant valley upon every side were savage enough in conscience, and differed entirely in character from those we had lately had to deal with: they were composed of a sort of rock of various colours, red, yellow, green, or ash-grey, which crumbles easily down on being exposed to the air, and forms the soil of the hills and plain beneath. No vegetation was to be observed except fir, and *arbor vitæ*, above noticed, with some juniper, all of which looked exactly like black dots thickly scattered over the surface.

At Hajee-Humza, although to our inquiries regarding the state of the road, the reply was still a shake of the head and "*Châmoor tchowk, tchowk*," they gave us horses so lean and small and wretched, that our first idea was that the postmaster was passing a scurvy joke upon us; and assuredly no one imagined they could possibly take us to the next stage. But either there were no others to be had, or the Tatar could not get them; so on we fared in sleet and rain along the course of the Kizzil Ermâk, the alluvial soil on the banks of which, every

here and there, up to the very foot of the rocks, was converted into rice-grounds — and there, Heaven knows, there was *Châmoor tchowk* with a witness, as our poor horses could testify, to their own cost and our most vexatious delay. Five times did one of the load-horses fall or settle down in the slippery mud, or in deep miry loam; and a dirty as well as a difficult job had the Tatar and Soorajees in dragging him and the others—for all fell or stuck more or less frequently—out of these sad sloughs of Despond. About half-way on we found a danger of another sort to encounter, in a fearful pass which traverses the face of a rock above the Kizzil Ermâk.

A spur of the mountain terminates in a bold perpendicular cliff of some ten or twelve hundred feet high, at the foot of which the river roars and boils in a huge pool; and midway in air, across the face of this rock, perhaps four or five hundred feet above the torrent, has the road been carried, principally by quarrying and blasting the solid stone—a huge and fearful work. The path thus made is about ten feet broad, built up and paved where the living rock suffices not for the floor; and there is a parapet too, but so thin and low in some parts as to give the idea that were you to fall against it, it would give way, and you topple headlong over. The whole may be a quarter of a mile long, with a steep ascent to, and descent from it. The weather was so bad, that I scarcely knew the nature of the place until I was right upon it; and it actually made one sick to look over at the dark-green boiling water with loads of ice going down in it;—the soles of my feet tingled

again as if I were already falling. You may conceive what a business it was; the horses with their smooth shoes sliding and sprattling along the ice-covered rock and stone pavement of this nervous place, and we afraid to stop in order to dismount. The name given by the Tatar to this ugly step was "Surmâse-kiayah."

There was a most noble view, however, from this height, of the fair and rich valley, up stream, to Osmanjik. The mountains on either hand were abundantly picturesque, with their peaks cut by time and weather into fantastic castellated-looking crags: but really, what with bad roads and bad weather, there was but little enjoyment of scenery to be had. A wild evening, half storm, half crimson glow, lighted up the romantic crag of Osmanjik, rising like a huge black giant with a castled coronet out of the fair valley which we were ascending; but the uncertain moonlight prevented us from seeing more than that we crossed a broad foaming stream, one chief branch of the Kizzel Ermâk, by a noble old bridge, and that the town extended along both sides of the river. It was with the utmost difficulty that we brought our jaded horses to the post-house, and one of them fell from utter exhaustion twice in the very streets.

Fortunately—for we had a tough forty-eight mile stage before us—we got capital nags at this most interesting old place, and left it, after a very slight dinner, about half-past eight of the evening, for Marsteewan. Recrossing the river, which we now left, we ascended the valley of a tributary stream to

another tremendous pass, rendered still more formidable by the obscurity of the night. Our approach to it seemed to be through the very bowels of the mountain, in the bed of a furious torrent, where no man could have imagined a path to have existence; and from which, turning up a narrow fissure, we scrambled on in the darkness, leaving all to the instinct of our horses, till we emerged, far above, upon the very brink of a black abyss, along which we still continued ascending by a narrow, rocky, zig-zag path, paved here and there, but without any parapets, for a height of, I suppose, six or seven hundred feet. It was a frightful tug. You must know that the Turks do not *frost* or sharpen their horses' shoes, as we do, to keep them from slipping on the ice; and here all was ice and melting snow; and the track was on the very verge of the precipice: there was no getting off to lead the horses, or walk; we did not even dare to stop. It was neck or nothing; a breathless scramble up—up; often holding on by the mane to keep from slipping off behind. Nothing but the conviction of this, and of my own helplessness, embarrassed with great boots glued to the stirrups by ice, and our heavy cloaks frozen rigid as a board in their folds, could have kept me in the saddle. The descent was not so long, but fully as dangerous, and even more horrible, for there you were constantly looking down into the black yawning gulf, from whence the far-off sound of the winter-torrent came roaring up in fits as the wind sighed down the glen. The scenery was magnificent—perhaps darkness increased the effect. I do not know

whether the mountains are very lofty, but the clouds were circling round each tall spiry cliff as if they were propping the heavy sky. Daylight might have detracted from the grandeur and gloom—it scarcely could have lessened the toil or the danger; and well as I love mountain-passes and mountain-scenery, I never desire to cross the Drekler-daugh pass again in a stormy winter-night.

The snow continued to fall fast and the cold was as bitter as ever while we ascended the stream above the pass, till about two in the morning, when we reached a sort of guard-house, and were comforted by a warm breakfast of wheat-pillaw, with *yaoort*, or sour milk, and *koimák*, or thick boiled cream. It was sorely wanted to sustain us, for we had a long dreary succession of ascent and descent to encounter still; and at last we arrived at a wide plain, where the line between the snow and sky was imperceptible, and where, in wandering about in the trackless white, we first lost our way, and then our time in trying to find it. But, worst of all, I think, was the insuperable drowsiness that weighed on all the party; not one of us could keep his eyes open for three minutes together; so that even when the road might chance to be good, the horses took their own pace to it. Oh! it was sore weary work! How often, in the painful struggles with drowsiness and deadly cold, did I strain my eyes eastward, to catch the first grey gleams of dawn, chill and icy as it must be! How often did I mentally repeat those beautiful lines of Joanna Baillie, as each cloud, a little lighter than the rest, would rise and spread, and then fade away

into darkness, leaving only disappointment behind!—

"Where northern billows meet the sky,
A pale dull light the seamen spy,
As spent they stand, and tempest-tost,
Their vessel struck, their rudder lost;
While distant homes, where kinsmen weep,
And graves full many a fathom deep,
By turns their dismal thoughts portray.
'Tis some delusion of the sight,—
'Some northern streamer's paly light.'
Up! says roused Hope with generous scorn,
It is the blessed peep of morn,
And aid and safety come, when comes the day!"

And come at last it did, sure enough: but it was not till more than broad daylight that we fully recovered our senses; and then, indeed, shaking off the leaden hand of sleep, and settling ourselves in our saddles, we struck into a sharp gallop over a road which had less snow, and more stones and ice, and which carried us into Marsteewan about eight in the morning. How our smooth-shod horses managed to keep their legs on the sheets of ice over which we galloped like wild colts, I know not; I suppose Turkish posters have a peculiar faculty for maintaining the perpendicular: but be that as it may, we got in at the time I mention with necks unbroken.

Of Marsteewan we saw but little. Its inhabitants are very strict in religious matters; so much so, as rather to let strangers starve than to furnish them with either food or fire in the Ramazan. Not a room had we to sit in, nor a fire to warm us; so, while

the horses were getting ready, we comforted ourselves as best we might in our wet clothes upon a bench outside the post-house, and bolted some miserable stuff, which was all the Tatar could ferret out for us.

Our next stage to Amasia, eight hours, or thirty-two miles, lay across the very extensive plain of Marsteewan, every inch of which might be cultivated, and on the skirts of which in fact we saw many villages, and multitudes of cattle were feeding all over it. Its fine loamy soil was now deep in mud, for the frost was but partial here; but in spite of that, and the rain which had succeeded the snow-storm of the preceding night, we galloped the greater part of it, reaching Amasia in six hours, covered with mud and soaked to the skins. The mud of this stage, mixed with the melting snow, beat all we had yet seen; it was "*Châmoor tchowk —yâmoor tchowk*," with a vengeance.

The last part of the stage led us over a range of down-like hills, from which, by a steep descent, we lighted in the hollow in which Amasia lies. This is a most interesting place, and looked doubly imposing under the circumstances of the weather when we approached it. The mighty cliffs that tower over it were half obscured in clouds and vapour, and partially covered with snow. The city stands in a narrow cleft like a statue in its niche, spreading out its feet towards the fine river that flows through the ravine in which the whole is pent. One abrupt conical rock, that towers several hundred feet above it, is crowned with a castle, and connected by a neck with the loftier ranges. The narrow strip of soil

which skirts the river — a principal branch of the Jeykil Ermâk—is covered with orchards and gardens, and the river itself is seen rushing down a dark valley from the right. I never saw a finer subject for a drawing; but the rain fell fast, I was wet to the skin, and, alas! alas! we are travelling Tatar.

Amasia being a considerable town, and we having now travelled seven hundred miles within the six days in desperate weather, and stopping, as you have seen, only a few hours at a time, and when we could not help it, we resolved to make an honest halt of twelve hours in order to dry our clothes and refresh ourselves a little with a bath. But the great, gaunt, ruinous, dark, fetid stable, which did duty for a post-house, promised so little of comfort, that we insisted on having an apartment of some sort to ourselves. The Tatar at first, after showing us through some upper lofts of the same building, through which the still-falling rain was pouring in torrents, assured us that nothing better was to be had,—probably, for fear of disobliging the postmaster, whose profits would be diminished by our departure; but on speaking firmly to him, he conducted us to a khan or caravanserai, where we soon found decent quarters.

The bath, we learned, was not to be ready for an hour; and during this time we sat uncomfortably enough in our wet clothes around the *smoke*—not the flame—of wet wood, which we tried in vain to coax into a blaze: nor did it, after all, prove half so comfortable as my bath of yore at Philipopoli. The

Greek or Armenian attendants were all half-drunk; and while we lay undressed on the stone floor waiting for the Dullâk, several Turkish soldiers came in, who, if not drunk, were insolent, and stood staring and laughing at us in spite of the remonstrances of the Hummamchee. They played tricks without end, apparently with a view to provoke a quarrel; put out the lights, kicked over the bathing utensils, as if by accident, and so forth: but no notice being taken of them, they at last went out one by one, leaving us to our own devices. I have generally found coolness and contempt more efficacious in rebuking insolence, than any show of anger or impatience.

After the bath we returned to our khan, where a bright fire and a good dinner awaited to reward our toils; one of the best of the components of the repast being a magnificent turkey, which we bought for twenty piastres, or about five shillings, and which served us nearly for three days. Satisfied with food, after the manner of the ancients and the most sagacious quadrupeds, we lay down to sleep, giving strict orders to be called so as to mount by four in the morning of the 23rd instant.

These orders were obeyed as Soorajees and Tatars do usually perform such behests, particularly when their promises are confirmed by oaths and protestations. It was as lovely a morning as heart could wish,—hard frost all night, succeeded by a brilliant sun; but such was the neglect of our faithless guides, that it wa snear eight o'clock before we started.

It was tantalizing to quit this most interesting spot, the birthplace of Strabo the geographer,

and so well described by him, without a peep at its curiosities and antiquities. While crossing the old bridge on the preceding evening, we had remarked the large water-wheels that supply the city and irrigate some of the gardens, and saw from a distance the caverns or grottoes in the rock of the ancient Hermits. We saw, too, a fine Greek church as we left the town, and remarked several buildings of a very antique appearance throughout the city; in leaving which we traced, for full two miles, the aqueducts cut in the rock, which Strabo takes notice of; but, alas! we were posting! duty is imperative; and to that which would have claimed the attention of many days, we could not devote an hour. So, on, on we pushed, clattering over a rocky road, till a turn in the rock hid Amasia and its antiquities from our view.

We soon left the valley of the Jeykel Ermâk, or Iris, as Macdonald Kinnear calls it, to ascend a rugged and curious defile in the face of a limestone mountain, naturally cut by a clear pretty little rivulet, now bound in icy chains. At one point, the path narrowed so much as to leave scarcely room for more than one horseman to pass between the closing rocks; it was paved to render it torrent-proof, and has, I suspect, at one time been fortified. After ascending considerably, the road led us over some low hills, scantily clothed with a variety of Scotch fir and small oak among thorns and brushwood, and thence down into a plain to Toorkhal, our stage, a distance of forty-eight miles, which we performed in little more than seven hours, having cantered a good part of the way.

Toorkhal is a lofty fortified rock, overlooking a very squalid town, the flat roofs of which, differing much from those of the towns we have lately seen, reminded me a good deal of Persia, and not the less so from the bare and open country with which it is surrounded. Here we were speedily supplied with fresh horses, and, lighted by a splendid moon, galloped briskly over a long undulating plain to Tocat, eight hours, or thirty-two miles, which we reached by ten at night. It is a noble old place, and, with its fine castellated rock and picturesque mountains behind it, looked extremely grand in the moonlight; but all we could distinguish was that the city was extensive, situated in a well-cultivated country, and probably as well worth examining as anything upon the road. The sleepy-headedness of our Tatar, or some other cause, detained us here three hours, during which we swallowed a few eggs and a bit of cold turkey, and by one o'clock on one of the coldest mornings and hardest frosts possible, took the road to Niskar, a stage of thirty-six miles.

The road to that place wound among a succession of hills and valleys, some of them beautiful and well cultivated: and a bitter cold but splendid orange dawn found us ascending a defile clothed with oak-wood, which led us over a highland country to another ravine containing some as fine woodland scenery as need be seen. Its sides were mantled with a forest of noble oak and beech and fir, with an undergrowth of thorns and evergreens, quite down to the brawling stream that gurgled under its frosty coating in the bottom of the glen. It resembled the well-kept plantation of a nobleman's

park—a pleasure-ground upon a magnificent scale, rather than a scene of mere natural beauty. The road, which was covered with ice and hardened snow, ran along the stream; and as we rattled along at a slapping pace, you may conceive at what risk the horses with their shoes as smooth as polished steel skated and sprawled along;—but such is the Tatar fashion, and it was not for us to do aught to abate speed.

The whole of the glen is narrow; and the lower part, where the rocky sides approach nearer to each other, was covered with evergreens, and looked like summer in spite of the snow that covered the hills above. I saw here one or two varieties of the privet, Portugal laurel, box-tree, rhododendron, phillyrea, and, as I think, bird-cherry, still in leaf, with fir and *arbor vitæ*, as before. All was truly beautiful, and the streamlet raved and hurried away from pool to stream just for all the world like a Highland burnie. At the foot of the defile there is a village, with numbers of noble walnut-trees, from which you debouch upon the fine valley of Niskar, a wide sheet of rich land, well cultivated, and surrounded by lofty mountains. Here there was no snow—we had left it all behind on the heights; and they say this happy valley enjoys a total exemption from such a wintry visitor; for, though it falls, it never lies for any time. The blessing may probably be considered as more than overbalanced by the intense heat of summer: and now the mud was as perplexing to us travellers as the snow.

We crossed the plain, however, with comparatively

little detention, and entered the town, which lies on the north-eastern side of the valley, in time to make a tolerable breakfast. Niskar itself is a striking and beautiful though singular-looking place. It lies at the mouth of a glen, at the confluence of two rapid streams which form a branch of the ancient Lycus. The town itself is strangely scattered among orchards and gardens, mantling up the side of a hill, so that the streets are very irregular and precipitous. The bazar we rode through was poor, and the old castle which we passed was ruinous: yet the place itself seems populous and prosperous. The houses, as we had before observed in many places, were built chiefly of wood frame-work, filled up with sun-dried bricks; but the post-house we were shown to was one of the most comfortable of any we had seen.

I do not exactly know the boundary between the province of Anadoli, as the Turks call it, and Armenia; but Niskar is a town of the latter: and here we leave the lower regions of Asia Minor to ascend the far colder and mountainous plateau of Armenia, where the Euphrates and several other large rivers of this country take their rise. In leaving these parts, therefore, I may take occasion to remark what I do not think I have mentioned before; that one great difference between the aspect of Asiatic Turkey, so far as I have seen it, and that of most parts of Persia, independently of the beauty and richness, and wooded clothing of the former, is this: that in Persia there are to be traced nearly everywhere strong evidences of a greater prosperity and cultivation than now exists, in the numberless

ruins of towns and villages; whereas in Turkey, though the villages you see may be comparatively few, you will observe none ruined or deserted. It must be remembered, however, that I only mention this as an impression received, as regards the latter country, under the circumstances of a rapid transit in vile weather, and at a very unfavourable season, and therefore not entitled to any high pretensions to accuracy: nor do I attempt to account for the fact, if even it be admitted to be true.

As soon as we could get horses, we set forth upon a serious twelve-hour stage, consisting chiefly of an ascent to the highland tract just mentioned. The first part lay over uneven ground, covered with small oak, juniper, and thorns; but as the ascent became sharper, the forest grew more dense, and consisted of finer trees; and besides oak and beech, we remarked ash, elm, lime, yew, and hornbeam. Hazel and underwood, of various European sorts, abounded in the middle regions; and the upper parts of the mountain were clothed with dark tracts of Scotch fir, which, however, did not appear to grow to any great size. Among them it was strange to see many large pear and apple trees growing vigorously in the midst of the deep snow—for to snow we had again reached. — For a third of the ascent we had only mud to deal with, and, mingled as it was with stones and gravel, it was deep enough to tease and retard us extremely. That passed, snow made its appearance, and increased as we ascended until we found it lying full four feet thick, the road being reduced to a narrow track beaten down by

previous passengers, along which only one person could move at a time; and if he attempted to quit it, down he went, almost out of sight. The whole ascent, naturally toilsome, was rendered infinitely more laborious by this weight of snow; and the track, slight enough even by daylight, was so imperceptible by the moonlight in the flickering shadows of the forest, that it seemed miraculous how the Soorajees made it out at all. Find it, however, they did, throughout the long weary stage, till nearly at the last mile, when, in crossing a bleak hill, they utterly lost it, and we wandered about, floundering deeper and deeper in search of it, until the fall of a baggage-horse and Soorajee nearly over head and ears into a hollow filled with snow gave us a strong hint that we had taken a wrong direction. Accordingly, after digging out our luggage and live stock, we returned by the way we came, to find the path we had quitted; but we might have gone on until morning, had not the Tatar observed one of the horses inclining towards the right, in spite of the Soorajee's efforts to drag him another way. He called to the man to let the beast have its will: and the animal, freed from the leading rein, immediately turned up a very tolerable track which had escaped the notice of us all, and which led us straight to our munzil, at the village of Eskee-soor. It was a miserable place; but its dirty post-house, swarming as it was with vermin, and with Soorajees and blackguards little better, was warm and acceptable to our thoroughly-chilled frames; and a decent sort of a dinner completed our restoration to good-humour.

I have omitted to mention, that in the course of the ascent this day, I remarked a simple and ingenious method of securing the fords of a mountain-stream from being destroyed or washed away by floods. They cut down one or two trees, which are laid across the stream, just below the line of the pathway: branches and brushwood are then heaped on these, and above them, in the course of the stream, and the whole is kept down by large stones. The gravel brought down by the first flood is caught and entangled by this brushwood; and so a fine flat space is produced for the ford, which is rather improved than destroyed by the action of the torrent.

The invariable effects of a cold night and sleepy heads kept us this day (the 26th of January) from starting at the time we should have done. There is no possibility of rousing out snoring Soorajees to do their work in a bitter winter's night, particularly when the number of horses required is considerable, for that alone affords an excuse for dawdling and delay. It was past five o'clock before we mounted, with a dark louring sky, which soon made good its threats, and ended with treating us to a regular "feeding snow-storm." Our road lay across much such a range of hills as we had the last stage, with some severe pulls, and desperately bad road. We passed many small villages of log-houses formed of unsquared fir-trees, very rude affairs, with flat roofs, made by covering a layer of logs with beat earth, the wood being all cut from the adjoining forest. Some of the houses were constructed with stones, secured by a frame-work of logs, built longitudinally

in the wall, one above another, with intervals of two or three feet. Many of them were built on the side of a hill, and half sunk in the earth.

These villages were beautifully situated above little streams, and among gardens and fields, divided by rows of walnut and other fruit trees, such as apples, pears, cherries, and the like; and there was abundance of cultivation all around them. I should call it the most populous district I had seen: perhaps it might appear more so because the houses were not collected so much into large villages, but stood scattered about in groups like farm-steadings at home. Singular, that so inclement a region as this—for it is desperately cold — should bear stronger evidences of prosperity than the more genial plains we had left below!

Last night, so intense was the frost, that there was not a drop of water to be had to drink, and our boots and clothes were frozen hard, as usual. But I am tired of telling you of these things, and so, no doubt are you; yet what else can I tell you of on such a journey?

This day was a little milder, — it generally is so while snow is falling if not accompanied with a frosty wind; but it was still bleak enough, and the road was very difficult,—constant ups and downs; and it was marvellous how the loaded beasts contrived to keep their legs at all in shuffling and scuttling down the long slopes of ice. Indeed, none did escape without a tumble or two, though fortunately no serious damage was done. Our last descent, which was a desperate one, brought us down to the bed of a

river which the Tatar called the Kizzil Ermâk, but which is the Lycus of Kinnear, a branch of the same Jeykel Ermâk we crossed at Amasia: cold and wintry did it look, of a dirty green colour, as it boiled along in pools, carrying down vast quantities of ice. Along the banks of this stream did we speed, mounting and descending over huge knobs of the rocky mountains that form its glen, until after a desperate stage of twelve hours, full forty-eight miles of very mountainous road, we turned right up the face of an almost perpendicular rock, and, by a zig-zag path, gained a gorge, from whence we dropped into the village of Kooli Hissar, like a bird into its nest. Mem.: let us never say a word against Turkish post-horses; the creatures we rode were little, lean and galled, as usual, and no little did it take to urge them through the snow and mud and mire of this desperate stage; yet, in spite of all previous hard work, the diminutive wretches tugged us up this last severe pull with full as much speed as they had at first starting, and my little nag, in cantering in the last two or three miles, needed hint from neither spur nor whip.

The position of Kooli Hissar is quite characteristic of the country around it, which consists of round lumpy hills formed of earth or very destructible rock, and cut into thousands of ravines and ridges, punch-bowl-like hollows, such as that in which the village is built. Wood—that is, the *arbor vitæ* and fir are scattered all over these hills in anything but a picturesque shape; and, in fact, the whole country, for a mountainous one, is tame and

uninteresting. The prettiest thing about it was what Sir Henry Stuart would call its "winter foliage;" for the dwarf oak keeps almost all its summer leaves, changed to various hues of red and brown and yellow. Still, hill after hill is the same,—the forests produce no effect on the landscape, nor, indeed, upon the mind, except from contemplating their extent. Nor are the ravines impressive, except occasionally from their depth and abruptness.

Of the village of Kooli Hissar we saw little, except that the houses were prettily interspersed among orchards; for it was dark ere we arrived, and darker still when we left it. It takes its name from a curious old castle, a little further down the river, near a wooden bridge, by which we crossed its stream; but on a very lofty ridge, that frowns just over the place, there are also the remains of an old fortification.

We lost no time in ordering horses; but were told that the road, which leads upwards along the river-banks, is naturally so dangerous from precipices and bad steps, that in its present state, covered with ice and snow, none of the Soorajees could be got to attempt it except by daylight. This information, backed by a decided disinclination on the part of the Tatar, who, though he professed himself ready to move if we were resolved upon so doing, yet kept constantly throwing obstacles in the way — and by a continuance, or rather increase, of the storm, which had been pelting us all day—induced us very reluctantly to acquiesce in remaining till the dawn of morning where we were. So we did what we could to make ourselves comfortable for our prolonged halt,—and

might have been so, but for the two eternal plagues of Turkish post-houses — hungry fleas and saucy Soorajees. This was a perfect rendezvous for both; but still we made the best of it, and greatly enjoyed the genial heat of a blazing wood-fire. As to food, they gave us what they misnamed pillaw, videlicet, a few handfuls of stale bread cut down into shreds, and stewed or boiled into a mess, with a little rancid butter, and a few onions shred over it: and with this vile compound they insult the stomachs of unfortunate and hungry travellers, and the venerable name of one of the best dishes which the art of gastronomy has ever produced in Europe or in Asia. Indeed, you may take it for granted that when I speak of "pillaw" during this journey, it is this rascally imitation of that goodly composition which is meant, and not the honest stuff itself.—So much for the fare of a Turkish post-house in the Ramazan.

After a poor concern of a night, our wet clothes scarcely dried, devoured by fleas, and sleepless from the songs and the gabble, and the bustle and the snoring, of the Soorajees and people of the post-house, I aroused them by three in the morning of the 27th; but it was five before we got clear of the village. Descending again into the river-bed, we pursued its windings for nine hours, or thirty-six miles, cantering along the flat, gravelly, or alluvial ground, at the mouths of the chasms and ravines, and occasionally cutting off a nose of the mountains that enclose them, and which run abruptly down to the river's edge in great rocky knobs. These were the dangerous bits of which we had been warned the

night before, and bad enough they were of all conscience; for the path was just a zig-zag scramble up a face of rock — a progress along its surface upon a track not two feet broad, and all covered with ice and snow, and a descent of the same description to the next piece of level ground. It was frightful to look down, from the height we had reached, on the black pool that seemed to boil within its icy banks far below, and into which you were conscious that a single slip of the horse must infallibly precipitate you. My flesh crept on my bones as I felt the horse struggling under me with the slippery rock, on the face of which we seemed to be scrambling like a fly upon a pane of glass, without its power of adhesion; and I leant instinctively inwards, clinging, as it were, to the mountain-side, as we half hung over the giddy precipice in our following the path along its brink;— a bad plan by the way, as a Persian friend of mine, a bold and capital horseman, once told me; "for," said he, "you should rather lean *outwards*, which will make your horse incline the other way, and hug the hill-side."

When we had made twelve miles of our way, the hills changed their character, becoming more craggy with less wood. The rock appeared to be a species of porphyretic trap; but it sometimes assumed a conglomerate form, enclosing various substances of the nature of which I was ignorant. About half-way, or twenty-five miles onward, the river bursts through a singular mountain of rugged black rock, by a narrow pass; and the whole opposite side, as we entered it, was echoing to the shouts of the inha-

bitants of a little village among the cliffs, who were collecting their sheep. One of these had contrived to cross the river, and presented me with a red-legged partridge, which he and his companions had caught by springing it twice or thrice, and then running it down, when weary, in the snow. The whole of this stage appeared particularly dreary and desert, for we saw not a single village nor any cultivation, nor, with the exception of the people just mentioned, any signs of inhabitants; but we were told that several villages did exist in the mountains around.

It was altogether a gloomy day's journey—cold and miserable. The snow or sleet fell incessantly, and wetted us through; and, to cheer us, we saw a couple of eagles and half-a-dozen crows busy about some tit-bit in the river; no doubt the carcass of some poor animal, or traveller who, less fortunate than ourselves, had perished, probably, by falling into its waters,—a shrewd hint of the fate we might possibly experience. After all, we made out our stage better than might have been expected, arriving about three in the afternoon at Kara Hissar, a place as black as its name,—a lofty fortified rock, overlooking a considerable town,—and thus performing the twelve hours, or forty-eight miles, in ten hours of time,—good going for such roads. At this place, however, there was every prospect of our coming to a stand-still; for the snow thickened as the day advanced: it had already, they told us, fallen for three days, and was very deep in the vicinity of the town; and the next stage was one of sixteen hours, or sixty-four miles, across a tract of lofty mountains,

without a single village on the way. This was a serious undertaking in a stormy night; and the Soorajees and postmaster looked grave and shook their heads when we demanded horses: so, it being clear enough that, come what might, we should require all our stamina to get through with our work, we ordered food, and consented to remain a couple of hours to see how the night was likely to turn out.

At five o'clock the snow-storm had thickened, and the Soorajees positively refused to proceed. It was certain destruction, they declared; — to find the way would be impossible, and we were certain to perish, horse and man, if we attempted to pass the mountain at such a time. While we were talking the matter over, the evening gun, which gives signal of sunset in the Ramazan, and permission for the hungry faithful to break their fast, gave forth its summons, and we had the appetizing whet of witnessing the postmaster and his myrmidons at their evening *dejeuné*, — and a capital one it was, I assure you. Dish after dish was presented, and whipped away, as soon as the guests had done it honour, with as much rapidity and propriety as if it had been the meal of a pasha and his friends, — and well did the greasy rogues bury their ugly fists in the contents of each. The humours of a Turkish post-house, however original, are somewhat of the coarsest, and the company it introduces you to is not always the most choice; still, it is a chapter in the book of human character, and is worth the reading. I have already given you sketches of a Turkish coffee-house and post; but I fear I should fail

sadly in any attempt to convey to you an idea of the thousand strange scenes, and their grotesque actors, that present themselves to view in such a journey as this. Language could not convey the various shades of difference, and you would be tired of seeming repetition without being amused. But were you to see the host of wild and indescribable figures that rush out on your arrival, and pull you from your horses; the multitude of the same species that, on entering the dirty stifling hole, you find stretched like beasts before the fire, or lounging in the corners on the squalid rugs that receive from day to day, and from year to year, the filth of these obscene animals, on which *you* also must stretch your weary limbs, or remain unrested: were you to see travellers, like ourselves, rushing in, snow-covered, mud-plastered, ice-clad, throwing themselves, "boots and all," upon these precious couches; were you to see the unclean, half-naked, greasy biped that flits about the fire-place, and proceeds to exercise one of the functions of his calling, in the brewing of coffee; were you to watch this delicate process, and see the functionary himself licking his little spoon, after stirring the beverage in which you are to share, or wiping it on one of his own black rags before immerging it again in the pot;—you might form some faint notion of the manner in which matters are carried on for the comfort of travellers in these admirable establishments.

Nor would the sequel edify you less. As night comes on, and you may have made up your mind to remain a few hours to recruit your exhausted frame,

you naturally hope to spend them in rest and quietness. Vain expectation! Having bolted your food with what appetite you may,—and hunger is good sauce,—you lay yourself down resignedly on one of the aforesaid tempting heaps, and soon experience the composing effect of weariness and repletion combined; but just as your eyes are closing, in rush the whole possé—postmaster and men, Soorajees, Cahwajees, aspirants, stable-boys and all, with any superannuated veterans or unemployed individuals of the cast about the town—who look to having their repast and comforts as you have had yours. This having been devoured, *cum multo strepitu*, and some of the understrappers having cleared away the wreck, with the trays on which it was served, you may see—for your eyes are by this time wide enough open—the *artiste*, who so respectfully served you with coffee, brewing a fresh brewst. This he hands in due form to the good company, himself taking the last rich cup, with all the grounds, and sipping it like any bey or pashah. This being performed, he fills and lights his own pipe, and squats down like a gentleman that has performed his duty, helping himself out of any bag—your own perhaps—that happens to be next him; a freedom in which he is followed by the rest: and there they all sit enveloped in a thick cloud of tobacco-smoke, out of which, like the mutterings of thunder from a stormy sky, comes the incessant gabble of their tongues; one fellow swears, another roars out a good story—a third contradicts him flatly—then up rises one, and, squatting himself alongside the fire, or close beside

your lair, begins to put his foot-gear to rights, pulling off and putting on his boots and rags of stockings; another washes his hands and feet, Mussulman fashion, and squats himself down to prayers at your very elbow; while a third holds a loud remonstrative altercation with the Tatar on some disputed point or fact. Then the sights, and the smells, and the oaths, and the brutal appearance and demeanour of the ugly gang,—who, after all, probably mean nothing offensive, but who all carry on the war like cocks on their own dunghill,—forms a *tout-ensemble* somewhat too strong for nice stomachs—a picture too broadly in the Ostade style to please most amateurs. And yet, in fact, it is they who are really at home, and you are the intruder. They are turned out to make room for you; it is their places you occupy, their beds you try to sleep upon, their fleas and crawlers which you are treacherously enticing away with your own fresh blood: so what right have you to complain? Complaint indeed would have been in vain, but grumble a bit I must say I did, just to relieve my spleen,—and this night in particular we had cause for it, for the whole place, floor and benches, were covered with the wretches holding forth or snoring away at such a rate, that all attempts at sleep were totally abortive.

By six o'clock in the evening the snow fell so fast, that to attempt some sixty odd miles of lofty and difficult mountain-road in such a night would obviously have been madness; and so thought the head Soorajee, who is the person to take the lead on

all difficult occasions,—for, on asking for him, he was nowhere to be found. Afraid of attempting the stage, and bound by a regard for his character, as well as his duty, to make the attempt if the Tatar required him to do so, he had taken himself out of the way, and the juniors declared their inability to guide us; so we were obliged perforce to remain, stipulating, however, that the horses should be ready and ourselves called by a very early hour in the morning. And on this occasion there was less hazard than usual of being disappointed, as the postmaster and Soorajees, both knowing that the stage, in its present condition, would require more than the eleven hours of daylight for its accomplishment, were likely, for their own sakes, to take care that it should be commenced in time.

Accordingly, at two in the morning of the 28th of January, I was awakened; and at three, we mounted and commenced one of the most toilsome and hazardous days' journeys of its kind I have ever made. But before we take the road, I must try to interest you a little in the very class of men I have been just abusing as rude and brutal, but who, coarse as they are, were to be our guides—on whom our safety was mainly to rely; for, it needs no ghost to tell, that a transit over sixty-four miles of mountainous desert, deep, deep in snow, and under a sky promising nothing better than continued storm, was an enterprise which a little ignorance or irresolution, or even ill luck and a brisk gale of wind, without fault either on the part of guide or horses, might

bring to a fatal termination in spite of every possible precaution.

I believe I have mentioned that the Soorajees of the Turkish post-houses are the guides of travellers, as well as the grooms of the establishment. Like the Tatars, they form a class quite as marked and distinct as that of our guards and coachmen in England,—or, more correctly to rank them, of hackney-coachmen, cabmen, and cads—and of muleteers in Persia. Trained from childhood among the animals of which they have the care, they are good grooms and admirable riders; and, accustomed to take the road and brave exposure in all weathers, they become bold, intrepid, and skilful guides in the lines of country where they ply. Their appearance is as peculiar as their character, though it is rather in air than in costume. The smart ones among them wear great shulwars (or riding-breeches), often highly embroidered; a short Turkish or Mamluc jacket of gay stuff, frequently of black or green or purple velvet, most richly ornamented, though generally sadly smirched; a striped silk or cotton vest, the skirts of which are stuffed into the trowsers; huge pistols or a yataghan, or both, protruding from their broad leathern-girdle and sash. On the head they wear a turban, wound in a peculiar loose and rakish style, generally over the *fez;* and they wrap their legs and feet in sundry bits of rag, cotton or woollen, winding them over and over again, like surgical bandages on a fractured limb: the whole is stuffed into their large boots, or sometimes into a sort of laced sandal of raw leather. Over their

shoulder hangs a bag for letters or despatches; from one side depends a chain, with flint, steel, and knife, and various instruments of the craft; and in his hand the fully-equipped Soorajee bears the clumsy sort of whip with which he belabours his unhappy steeds. Many of the class are less gaily equipped, and some may be seen almost in rags; but the great distinguishing mark of the species is the air of saucy and impudent, and often of brutal and surly, assurance which they wear, and which is only to be controlled by two considerations,—the hope of *Buksheesh*—that is, money, and the dread of the Tatar's whip; and it is plain that the second, which once was omnipotent, has in these latter days—from the system of reform,* and gradual decay of the executive power, I fancy—become greatly weakened; indeed, there are symptoms of the tables beginning to be turned. Be that as it may, a more useful, dashing, hard-working, purpose-like set of blackguards than these same impudent Soorajees in their own vocation, are not to be found; and were you to meet such a party as ours was, making the best of a bit of good road, the two Soorajees in their smart jackets, mounted on their little nags, ragged and tough like themselves, with their short stirrups, and knees almost up to their breasts, like monkeys astride upon terriers; each with bridle hanging loosely from the left hand, and the thong that guides the two load-horses held out with an air in the other; the head erect, but inclined a little to one side, as the

* The Tatars were all Janissaries,—the Janissaries, while they existed, were all-powerful; they are now destroyed; the consequence here is apparent.

owner casts back a look, first at their loads and then at their feet, as they pelt away at the top of their speed, but never deigning at his own, which he knows will take care of itself; the Tatar, in his gorgeous habiliments, and whip raised on high, following like a tower of strength, a perfect contrast to the slim lightness of the others, "yahullahing" it away to a running base of blows, his horse scattering showers of mud and gravel from each hoof as he scours along;—were you to see this vision tearing like the wild hunter and train over hill and down dale, along the mountain-side and across the level plain, you would say it was a gallant sight, and that these imps of Soorajees are a splendid set of rascals; verily, *tchelebee,* on these occasions, in his sober surtout or cloak, and travelling cap, cuts the poorest figure of the party.

This, however, is when all is going on well. But if you would see the true value of the Soorajee, look at him in times of danger and exertion; when the snow is deep, when the road is lost, when the load-horses stick in the mud, or flounder over head and ears in the snow; or roll, luggage and all, down a hill-face, carrying the snow with them like an avalanche. See then the fellows spring from their nags, plunge into the mud or snow, extricate the fallen animals and set them on their legs, or relieve them of their burthens, carrying the luggage on their own shoulders to firmer and safer ground; and when you have witnessed their vigour and alertness in spite of drifting snow and freezing fingers, you will confess, as I did to myself, that no men on earth

could be more suited for their work, or do it better, than these same Turkish Soorajees.

We were ourselves to have a taste of this work and a cast of their office to-day, with a specimen of the powers of Turkish posters also. A beast was brought for me to mount, a mare scarcely twelve hands high, dead lame, and so galled on back and belly, that I asked the Tatar, with some indignation, how he could consent to receive such an animal from the post-house, or dare to offer it to me. He saw that there was reason in the remonstrance, and he spoke angrily to the head Soorajee who was to accompany us; but the man's reply appeared to satisfy him, for he turned to me, and said that the Soorajee, who knew his own cattle, and whose interest as well as duty it was to see us well through the stage, assured him that the mare provided for me was one of the best in the stable, and would do the business capitally; "and," added he, "the man knows the work and the danger, and would not deceive me." Satisfied or not with this reasoning, there was no use in disputing it, especially as scarcely any of the other horses were a whit better in appearance. So, at three o'clock of as bitter a morning as ever chilled a poor traveller, we mounted by torchlight and left the village, plunging at once into the deep snow. The storm itself had abated, and, mercifully for us, though it sometimes did recommence with most threatening aspect, the day upon the whole turned out better than the preceding one.

Our way led through a very fine village, about two miles from Kara Hissar, situated on a grand roar-

ing stream, after which we crossed the river by a ricketty wooden bridge, and entered upon an ascent of dreary upland country, extending twelve or fourteen miles, the first part of which was bare, and the latter sparsely covered with wood. To us the whole tract seemed desert, although the traces of former cultivation were here and there apparent, and we were told there were villages among the mountains on either hand; certainly, none were visible. During the whole of this part of the stage, which, although it was entirely up hill, we went pretty briskly, as the new-fallen snow that covered the track was not tough enough to impede us much, one of the Soorajees ran on foot before us, apparently without any fatigue; this was necessary, in order to enable us to keep the road; and I thought, as I looked at him, of the famous pedestrians at home, and wondered whether this fellow, who seemed to do the thing quite as a matter of course, would not have held them a stout tug; for we were going at a rate of certainly not less than five miles an hour, and that for fifteen miles.

As we ascended, the snow increased in depth to four or five feet thick at least; so that we got on with great difficulty, the Soorajees and their horses wading before us, and often falling over head and ears into holes filled with snow, and frequently quite at fault concerning the road. We had worked on in this way for several hours, and there was cause to fear that our cattle would not stand it out much longer: as to ourselves, walking in snow of such a depth was utterly out of the question, and I began to speculate

seriously about the comforts of a night's berth in a snow-wreath, when, most fortunately for us, from one of the hollows of the mountains we were joined by another party of four or five Soorajees, leading home some ten or twelve empty horses. These men, sometimes taking the lead themselves, and sometimes driving before them their unladen beasts, formed a practicable track, and we got on much better; above all, it gave us *heart*, which we much needed, for it was desperate cold. We were losing much precious time in digging the animals and their loads out of the snow when they fell, and were benumbed in waiting or in helping at these processes. Our boots, soon wet through, had been frozen stiff, and the snow, which at times fell thickly, clogged our clothes and chilled our limbs. The wind, too, arose, and a heavy drift commenced: this was the most alarming circumstance of all, for with wreathing and drifting snow there is no contending. The country was of the most dreary character possible; long upland tracks, like the peat-moss hills of our own Scotch Highlands,—the Muir of Rannoch, or the Munelia Mountains, rose to my remembrance,—bordered with mean heights, and scattered over with straggling fir-trees. Our way lay for several miles by the side of a stream, sometimes heard beneath the snow, and sometimes becoming visible in sheets of cold-looking grey half-frozen marshes. This was an anxious and tedious part of the march. All was one mighty waste of snow—not the vestige of a track, and yet we had more than once to cross the stream. And now it was that our Soorajees showed their pluck, gallantly

spurring their horses here and there in the deep uncertain snow, often tumbling head over heels into pools of water or hollows, but instantly up again, and never daunted, they pricked for the road, and never halted till they found or made one; and much desperate floundering we had to get through such bits. It was a weary and an anxious day as ever it was my fortune to pass; and good reason had we to bear testimony both to the hard duty which these same Soorajees have to go through, and the admirable style in which they perform it. Brutal and impudent they may be; but that they are a stout-hearted and resolute race, prompt at need and fearless in danger, none who have travelled with them under circumstances like ours this day will be disposed to deny.

Night closed in while we waded over an endless succession of waving heights and hollows, and through an increasing pine forest, which terminated in a long descent. But not so terminated our toils; for many a sore struggle with snow wreaths and many a disappointment had we to endure, before our little nags,—after a ride of twenty-one hours in the saddle, without once dismounting except when they stuck in the snow,— brought us to the village of Sheheran; and though during this long period of continued exertion they neither halted nor got a morsel to eat, they came on for the last few miles along the plain at a good round trot; nor can I say that when we dismounted they seemed half as much fagged as their riders.—So much for the *bottom* of Turkish post-horses, and the *pluck* of Turkish Soorajees.

We had a cold welcome at Sheheran, — bad food, and little of it, and no horses to be had until morning; so that it was eight o'clock of January 29th before we got on foot again; and in truth I was not sorry for a few hours' rest. Our accounts of the road were far from encouraging: it was "*Kâr tchowk tchowk—tchowk daghler—pees daghler*,"—"A great deal of snow and plenty of mountains — bad mountains,"—in reply to our questions; nor were our minds relieved nor our hopes revived by having to start in a heavy fall of snow, and an atmosphere as black as night. But this had been for some time our daily bread; and we began to dread that, unless we pushed through the mountains and passes at once, we might be snowed up completely, and detained for weeks, if not for months, in some miserable village: so we mustered our courage and off we set, in spite of the declarations of the postmaster and his myrmidons that we should stick in the "*Elma-dagh*," a difficult pass over one of the mountains in our next stage.

Our route for the first part of the stage lay across country much resembling what we had passed the preceding day—plains and undulating ground covered with snow, on which a few trees of *arbor vitæ* and young fir and oak appeared like spots. A bitter cold and dreary twenty-four miles' ride through continued storm, with fresh snow up to the horses' bellies in the path, brought us to Chifflick, a considerable Armenian village. Although we could scarcely see our way from the drift, we did it in five hours. In the course of the stage, we took coffee at a guard-house of logs, built in a pass, and occupied

by a party of Turkish soldiers, whose business it was to protect travellers, and clear the road from thieves, of whom they assured us there was plenty. They pointed to a gallows erected just in front of the post, where they said they hung up all they caught, out of hand, sticking their heads afterwards upon certain spikes with which the gibbet was furnished; but the only head we saw upon them was that of a large red deer.

At Chifflick we had our first battle for horses. Posting at this season is so rare, that few are kept at the post-houses; and when more are wanted, the postmasters hire them from the villages around. This had been the cause of our detention at Sheheran; and this, together with a private motive of the postmaster's, delayed us here. The honest man had made up his mind to get more out of us than a mere breakfast would afford opportunity for screwing; and accordingly, by his manœuvres, the night had so nearly set in before the horses were collected, that, with the mountain-pass and snow before our eyes, neither Tatar, Soorajee, nor Tchelebee thought it expedient to make a start. We resolved, therefore, to wait till the moon should be up, which would be about two in the morning, and in the mean time to take our rest. Sad delays these, but inseparable from "a winter's journey Tatar."

No sooner had this resolution been announced, than the whole house was in a bustle;—the floor was swept out clean; odds and ends of domestic matters were shoved out of sight; mattresses and pillows taken from their secret places and spread upon the

elevated seats of honour near the fire ; and Soorajees, Cahwajees, and domestics, hurried about amain. The old man of the house, who had been dispossessed by us of his throne, (just below the *dais,*) and who had been hovering about like a restless spirit seeking its own place, resumed his seat, and lighted his pipe, — the Tatar did the same, and the old tobacco-bag went down even to the last of the Soorajees. We divested ourselves of our accoutrements, had our boots pulled off ; I took to my writing, Bonham to his chibook ; the place assumed a settled air of comfort, and a calm succeeded the tempest of clearance and preparation.

I should tell you that the houses and villages of that part of Armenia into which we had now entered are formed on quite a different plan from those to which we had hitherto been accustomed. They are in great measure built under ground, the earth that is excavated being heaped about the walls, an arrangement tending as much to the exclusion of light as to the increase of warmth : but to people who, when not in active occupation, smoke all day, or sit in almost utter idleness, this inconvenience is not much felt. As darkness closes in, their plentiful supply of wood enables them to keep up a blazing fire ; but when they require light for other purposes at night, they make use of the same sort of candle-fir, or splinters of fat turpentine pine, which is used in the Highlands of Scotland. It is produced by a disease in the common fir, which causes a congestion of its resinous juices to the part affected, and the tree is cut down for the sake of this alone, or the

part is cut out, leaving the rest to decay of itself. This waste may matter little in the extensive forests of Armenia; but it is a vile, mischievous, and thriftless practice in a Scotch plantation, where I have seen it carried on to a serious extent. For us *tchelebees*, when we wanted to write, an article of the lowest species of tallow candle, or a little oil in a cruse was provided to enlighten our lucubrations; but the red glare of the fir torches served all other purposes and people.

Scarcely were we settled for the night, when the voice of the Muezzin, from a neighbouring mosque, announced that to satisfy the cravings of nature was no longer a sin. A fresh bustle took place, and the room was instantly filled, but with more of order than usual. We on the raised platforms kept our seats and our mattresses, with the Tatar at our feet; on the other side of the fire, which was lower, sat the postmaster and an old man with a white beard, below whom was the head Soorajee, a tall, strong-featured fellow, in a huge turban, monstrous shulwars, and a well-worn jacket that had once been gay; the rest, to the number of six or eight, "ragged and tough" enough, and exhibiting a plentiful variety of grotesque physiognomy, ranging from that of the ape and the fox to that of the bear and the bull, took their seats in order below, while several of the still lower menials assumed a standing post at the foot of the apartment, or flitted about in service of the goodly company.

A portion of coffee was next extracted from the breeches pocket of mine host, and duly prepared by

a most squalid old wretch, with a ragged garment and a rusty beard; and, in the mean time, the little dinner stool, or table, was placed before the post-master, with a tray bearing what I thought but a scanty supply of food for such a company. To work, however, they fell, and soon made a clearance of the dishes, which, tray and all, were taken down to be licked clean by the menials. So ended scene the first.

The second was that of evening prayers. Two of the Soorajees, without "with your leave or by your leave," jumping up upon the lower part of the bench or platform where we sat, threw down their rug, and *sans* further ceremony began their *numáz*. It was soon over, for they got through it professionally, —that is, at the gallop,—and jumping down again, were succeeded by another brace, who performed their devotions in like manner; and so on till all had gone through the motions with equal unction and solemnity; the rest rattling, talking and swearing and abusing each other, as circumstances led them, all the while. At length up rose our old host himself, and took his place with a youth, probably, his son, who enunciated the whole formula aloud, the father following the movements and attitudes with much apparent zeal. And so finished scene the second.

In fact, I believed that the business of the evening, all except smoking a pipe or two, was at an end: but I was mistaken. No sooner had the old man resumed his seat, than in came stool and tray again, and this time much better loaded than before. The first supply of food had been but a

sort of slight breakfast, it appeared—a whet, to prepare the delicate stomachs of these *gourmands* for the full feast, and a solid one it was which was now produced. Dish after dish came and went as usual; and come what might, they were sure to be well cleaned out before they left the place, and, no doubt, all was the sweeter from the conviction that it was enjoyed principally at our expense. But the sweetest joys must have an end, and so must a Soorajee's feast. Repletion provokes to rest; a little more smoking and a little more gabbling, and all was still —still even to the huge dog, which was permitted to remain in the room (an unusual thing in a Turkish family), and whose occasional lazy growls sunk gradually into silence. We followed the good example, and stretching ourselves out where we sat, were soon buried in sleep.

January 30th.—A weary sleepy-headed race are both Tatars and Soorajees. In spite of vows and oaths, and although I awakened them myself at two this morning, it was past four ere we mounted after a slight breakfast. The morning was fine, and although the snow was very deep, we made good way for sixteen miles over undulating plains, and then up a valley sprinkled with juniper, fir, and *arbor vitæ* bushes, to a small village, where we halted and had a more substantial breakfast.

I never saw a more villanous and abject specimen of greediness and beggary than was exhibited by the old and respectable-looking man who was our host at this place, and by every individual of his family. When we alighted at his door, he could not make

too much of us; and I was so pleased with the people and their attentions, that I called one of his two young children who had come to stare at us, and gave it a piece of silver. This was as a signal to begin the grand attack: first came the other imp, insisting on having as much at least as his brother; next came the old villain himself, preferring his claim to *bukhsheesh* with ludicrous pertinacity, upon no better grounds that I could discover than that he believed me to be rich, while he himself was poor; and then every servant or individual about the place advanced with their respective demands. The only way to do in these cases is to leave, as I did, the Tatar to settle all their claims as he saw fit.

This old fellow, like our host of the preceding evening, would fain have frightened us from attempting the road, which, he said, was almost impassable, if not quite so—at all events, until next day: but as it was only ten o'clock in the forenoon, we scouted the idea, and taking four stout villagers as additional guides and assistants,—a most fortunate precaution as it proved,—we put our trust in Providence and forth we fared. Our difficulties soon began: even before reaching the ascent we encountered huge snow wreaths, where the horses sank, and, floundering through that which was fresh fallen into that which was old and tough, plunged almost inextricably deep. We now began to win our way by yards and feet instead of miles, and every step was so toilsome that there could be little hope of the horses lasting throughout the stage, or that

we should be able to cross the mountain before night-fall. We had constant accidents,—the baggage-horses sticking fast, and the Soorajees at every moment forced to dismount and relieve by unloading them—our own horses stumbling and sinking continually, so that we were every now and then obliged to get off their backs that they might rise.

I know nothing more disheartening than this fighting and striving on through a whole stage of deep tough snow—to see horse after horse, after plunging and floundering in a manner so violent as to strain all his frame and quite unsettle his load, at last stick fast and settle into the snow, where, until all his load is taken off, he must remain—from whence perhaps you know not where to drag him, lest he get deeper and more inextricably fixed. To see this go on, time after time, moment after moment, till your strength is gone, your spirits exhausted, and your hands useless and motionless with frost, the wind rising and night coming on, is, I assure you, enough to raise painful and anxious thoughts in the stoutest breast. On we worked with various fortune, until at last, in a monstrous wreath that lay right across a steep pull, the whole of us stuck fast and came to a stand-still,—my horse falling twice nearly buried himself and me, and became so frightened that I got off his back and began to lead him. We had cleared the greater portion of the wreath, when the creature, piercing through the crust of old snow, plumped up to the neck, just as it happened on the brink of the steep brae-face along which we were ascending. Kicking and struggling

over and away he went, dragging me after him, who held on as long as I could by the bridle-rein. Forced at last to let go, down he rolled in an avalanche, till stopped by the accumulating weight of the snow he had displaced. It was a service of no small difficulty and time to extricate the frightened animal, and I nearly lost one of my double-barrelled holster pistols, which tumbled out, and which was recovered only by the accident of a Soorajee's putting his foot upon it in the disturbed snow.

In the mean time, the foot-guides had managed to drag out the load-horses; and, this wreath passed, we hoped the worst might be over with it. It was a foolish hope, for we were just commencing the true ascent of the mountain, and the snow did not certainly decrease. Occasionally, indeed, where the wind had drifted it away we found a comparatively clear tract; and the art of the guides lay in so conducting us as to keep on these bare edges; and for this purpose we left the regular path and kept further up the mountain. But we paid dearly for such intervals of ease, in the toil of passing the desperate wreaths and fields of snow between—the accumulation of what had drifted from the bare spots. At length the horses became so exhausted, and they fell or sank so constantly into the tough old snow, while the top of the mountain was still far distant, that at one time I began seriously to think of the expediency of turning back while there was yet time, and ere the clouds that even now began to gather should break upon us in mist or snow or wind, either of which might bring matters to a

tragical conclusion; but the Soorajees still kept a good heart, and expressed their opinion firmly that if we could but reach a bare bleak-looking summit that was louring above our heads, we should in all probability get through.

It was not for me to check this zeal, so on we pushed with a toil I cannot describe to you—ourselves in our heavy boots, and rigid, snow-saturated garments, dragging foot after foot with pain along, sinking at almost every step mid-thigh deep, and often rolling over into holes of fresh-drifted snow. At last, however, we did attain the point of promise, where we found the ruin of a deserted log-house that had served in former times to give refuge to storm-beset travellers like ourselves, and appeared now to come in with ominous opportuneness to receive the bones of the party after they should have been frozen to death within its walls. I assure you, I eyed it more than once with a curious glance, as if to scan its capacity, in case we should fail in our attempts to get further. We did proceed, however, leaving it to our right, and soon got entangled in a labyrinth of hollows and wreaths, the receptacles of the snow from the heights, in which, after various desperate flounderings, our baggage-horses all stuck fast, just as the whole summit of the hill was enveloped in a sharp snow-storm. All was discomfort and alarm:—Bonham and I had by this time become like solid lumps of snow, chilled to death in spite of our exercise, and the people were all working as hard as possible in perfect sheets of ice. The day was far spent, although we had not

made out half our stage. Things seemed to be at their worst, and for a while despondence assuredly prevailed over us all.

Little consideration was necessary, however, to remind us that a relaxation of our efforts was not the way to extricate ourselves from our difficult position. A short cessation in the snow-storm showed us the descent close at hand;—the men pointed it out with a shout, and the work recommenced with vigour; a path was trodden down for the exhausted baggage-cattle—their loads were taken off and dragged over the snow to a firm spot. By the blessing of Heaven such perseverance was at length successful—we fairly turned the summit of the mountain, and then, although the animals frequently fell and slipped and floundered along, it was all down-hill, and each exertion took us nearer home. But a weary, weary time it was, and a long tedious way, and much of cold and misery did we sustain ere the huge fields of snow that lay between us and the little village of Lôree, at the foot of the mountain, were passed. And there, not being inclined, as you may divine, to encounter a second Alpine pass, after what we had already undergone, we came to for the night, happy to have a roof over our heads in place of a snow-wreath; and, considering that the snow continued to fall and the sky to blacken, and that there was every prospect of being storm-staid, right glad to find ourselves in a situation where we should not perish, at least of cold and hunger. Thus terminated our passage of the "Elma-dagh," or mountain of apple-trees, — I suppose from the quantity

of them that grow there: bitter apples they proved to us, for a time of more intense uneasiness I would not desire my worst enemy to endure. Yet, whatever were the secret thoughts of the two *Tchelebees*, they kept them to themselves; for neither was, I believe, willing to lessen the small confidence or hope which the other might entertain, by an interchange of doubts, and still less to depress the spirits of our guides by expressing them openly, so we held our breath and our counsel till all was over, and then gave vent to our feelings. Our bodily pains were not less severe than those of the mind,—my feet suffered intensely, and the keen wind seemed to pierce us to the very bone, through all our coverings.

Our lodging at Lôree was in the house of an old Turk, a chief seignor in the village, whose hall of reception was just part of a huge stable, railed off to separate the occupants from his horses and cows, which were feeding close to us. Our entrance disturbed a full assembly of worthies who were sitting there at their prayers, and we made interest for a smaller and more private room. But it was in vain—no smaller, or indeed any other apartment was to be had at Lôree: but they informed us that the assembly would soon disperse, and then we should have it all to ourselves. And so it turned out: after gazing at us a while, one by one, they went their ways and left us to the civilities of our old host, who in due time provided us with a very tolerable dinner.

The night set in gloomily: desperately heavy lead-coloured clouds hung low upon the hills we had

left; and they looked as if they were grinning in wrath at us for having lost their prey. A thick frost mist settled down upon the valley, obscuring everything beyond a few paces distant, so that we had no cause to be sanguine in our expectations for the morrow, for we knew that another night's snow would render the hill before us impassable, and we went to sleep in doubt and anxiety, but still resolved to make a bold attempt in the morning. But matters turned out better than we had a right to expect, and although our sleepy-headed people did not make the most of it, the morning commenced well, for two men who had crossed the hill on the preceding day, and were now returning, offered us their company and guidance.

Day broke upon us with a beauty which it maintained throughout—

> "There was not on that day one cloud to speck
> The azure face of Heaven;"

and the sun, "careering in his fields of light," shone down upon us with an ardour which would have hinted at May, had not the unspotted expanse of deep snow talked to us plainly enough of winter. I never saw the contrast so strong between sparkling unbroken white and the dark azure of the sky. We started cheerily about six o'clock, and, crossing the valley, soon commenced the ascent, which, as well as the descent, we accomplished with an ease that put our gloomy anticipations to the blush, and proved how little we should trust either to the accounts of others or our own prognostications. The cause of

this facility was, that less fresh snow had fallen in this quarter, and the old, in many places, supported our horses. Occasionally, indeed, they did break through the crust, and then there was some desperate floundering. My foolish beast tumbled me twice or thrice into the snow in this way, and there were several others of the company similarly discomfited; but on the whole we got on finely, reaching Kara-koulagh, our stage, and a miserable village, about eleven o'clock.

The hills we passed, in so far as we could distinguish for the snow, appeared to be all of the same earthy character so prevalent in Asia Minor; but, towards the end of the stage, I observed one of which the rock was a coralline limestone, with chert embedded, and of a red-yellow colour. Lofty and sharp-ridged mountains were seen to the south and east.

After a rather long detention we departed in high spirits, with the full hope of reaching Erzeroom without a stop; but we were doomed to a vexatious disappointment. Our course lay down a valley, and then over a range of moderately high hills, which intervened between us and a branch of the Euphrates. At the foot of the pass a quarrel occurred between the Tatar and one of the Soorajees, in which the latter behaved so ill, that I wished to have had him punished on the spot. But the Tatar seemed to be quite cowed, and it terminated in his informing us that the Soorajees found more snow than they expected, and could not promise for keeping the road during the night. This was quite an unlooked-for announcement, and entirely at variance with what

we had heard of the road while at the village. Indeed, from the Tatar's manner, I suspected some trick, some private interest concerned, and remonstrated accordingly; but it was of no avail. The worst of the matter was, that the village to which they wished to take us was a full half-hour or more to the right of the road; so that by the purposed arrangement we were to lose not only the time of halt, but full four miles of distance on a difficult snow-covered road. This was wormwood to us; but, ignorant as we were of the country, what could we object to the measures proposed by the man who was to guide us through it? Off went the Tatar, accordingly, with one of the Soorajees, to secure a good reception for us at the village; for it appeared that the inhabitants were Koords, fellows much more given to plundering than to entertaining travellers, and who either might not relish the intrusion, or, at all events, might not prove the safest and most disinterested of hosts. The *Tchelebees* and the other Soorajee followed more at leisure.

It was dark night when we reached the place, for the sun had set before the quarrel between the Tatar and guides, so that all we saw of the village on approaching it was its lights: but had it even been broad day, we should have made little out of the group of dusky heaps to which, as we approached, we were welcomed by the baying of a hundred dogs. The houses, burrowed in the ground on the side of a hill, were covered with snow; the entrances were black-looking holes, into which we plunged darkling, after dismounting from our horses,

and we found ourselves among a confused assemblage of buffaloes, horses and cows, men, women and children, who were all mingled higgledy-piggledy in a cavern, the size of which, smoke, and the red glare of torches, and dust and uproar, prevented us from discovering. Dire indeed was the tumult: as when a wicked boy thrusts a stick into a wasp's hole, out they rushed in crowds, but not, as it appeared, with mischievous, but hospitable intent; and our horses were taken from us, and ourselves laid hold of, amidst a lowing and bleating of beasts, a crying of children, and a gabble of women, that might have made one fancy he had got into a sort of Noah's ark in a gale of wind.

It was some time ere we elbowed and fought our way through the throng of men and brutes, and were introduced to an inner apartment, railed off as usual from the rest, and full of sitters and smokers, but where we were welcomed by an old man, and coffee immediately prepared and served up to us. It was a strange uncouth lodging, sure enough, as we saw when our eyes became sufficiently accustomed to the dim atmosphere to permit of our examining it. The walls, very rudely constructed of stones and wood and mud, resembled much some of the old Highland huts you have seen in the heights of Badenoch or Stratherrik, or in our own Caploch. The roof, supported by a few huge beams of wood crossed by smaller pieces, was covered with a thick terrace of earth formed with a pent, to let the water run off. Under this there were several apartments, more indeed than we could judge of, in the outer

ones of which were stabled the cattle; and it was through these we had won our way to the *sanctum* where we sat. Rude as everything about us was, there were some mats and carpets spread upon the mud floor, and a good fire blazed in the chimney, which, according to custom, was at the upper end, and over which there was a lamp with oil burning. We had left the regions of wood, and the fuel was cakes of dried cow-dung, but yet there was a cheerful air about the place, in spite of all its roughness, to which the cold external air made us more sensible; and I could not help confessing to myself that it was a far more comfortable abode than those to which I have just likened it, — to wit, to our Scottish Highland hovels. The people were all well and warmly dressed — some of them even gaily so; and a striking air of plenty and rude prosperity was evident in everything about them.

After staring at us for a while, as usual, these good people left us for a little alone; but they soon returned, in greater numbers; and, after holding counsel together in the "lower house," each man laid himself down where he chose or happened to be sitting, inside or outside of our apartment, and the whole floor was covered in a trice, "thick as leaves in Valombrosa," with snoring black heaps. What with the effluvia of men and beasts, and the remains of an ample fire, the heat became intense — the air suffocating. To sleep in such an atmosphere was impossible to our unaccustomed natures; and even could weariness have triumphed over these annoyances, the multitude of fleas alone would have

banished rest. I had, therefore, no claim to merit for being able to summon the Tatar at midnight, when, according to agreement, we were to mount and proceed; but an hour more elapsed before he would venture to awaken the formidable Soorajees, and then it was only gently, and "in the most delicate way in the world," according to Mr. Chucks, (vide Peter Simple,) to hint that the time for departure had arrived. But such measured solicitations were for a long time lost upon the brutal guides, and it was obvious both to my companion and myself that, for some reason or other, the Tatar was afraid of these men. He coaxed and conciliated them by all means in his power. At the time of dinner he asked us to sit down and eat with them,—a freedom we rather indignantly repelled; and when we called for a supply of our own figs, the man handed to them a parcel at the same time as to us, without even asking our leave. This complaisance was the more unaccountable, because, of all the coarse and brutal set we had met with, these fellows were the most sulky and savage, and tried our patience in every possible way, as if to show us how much they had us in their power. The Tatar, indeed, afterwards explained that, having now reached the Koordish country, where every man is a thief, and being far from any authority to whom in case of need he might apply for assistance, he conceived it prudent to avoid offending the Soorajees, who had much in their power, and who, had we persisted, this night, in despite of their remonstrances, might not only have abandoned us to our fate, but have

hastened it by an understanding with such people as the inhabitants of this very village, who, he declared to us, were nothing else than a gang of robbers and plunderers.

It was three o'clock in the morning of the 1st of February, and bitter, bitter cold, when we left this abominable little village, the name of which I never asked, and proceeded to regain the high road by a short cut across a tract of low hills. The track was tolerably plain in the snow; yet our guides more than once lost their way, as we very nearly did our noses and fingers from the intense frost. Our road next lay through the valley of a stream called the Ak-Kallah su, a feeder of the Euphrates, along which we went for some sixteen or twenty miles, to an old deserted caravanserai, where we halted to smoke a pipe and try to warm ourselves. This last was no easy matter; for the only fuel to be had was the dung of animals, and the cold penetrated to every bone of our body, through furs and all. I stamped to and fro in my heavy boots, knocking my arms about like an old hackney-coachman in a frosty day; but I could not bring circulation back to my limbs: it was desperate work. It was from this caravanserai that I wrote the little pencil-note which conveyed to you the first news of my safety so far.

While halting here we were joined by other travellers, Persians from Erzeroom, and a Tatar, who had been robbed and severely wounded, as he told us, only a short time before, near Bayazeed, a strong fortress on our way, and who had remained to recover if he could the amount so stolen from the

pashah of that place. The respective Tatars, or rather Soorajees, thought fit to exchange horses here, urging as an excuse for the delay which this arrangement occasioned, the chance that we might not get horses at Ashkallah, the stage to which we were going, and could take these, which belonged to that place, after a rest, on to Erzeroom. In spite of this detention, and an infamous road which bore hard upon our weak cattle, we contrived to reach our stage (Ashkallah) rather before nightfall; but finding that it would be impossible to get over the remaining thirty-six miles to Erzeroom by any reasonable hour, we resolved to halt where we were for a little time, and take the road again at an hour which would ensure our reaching that city early in the morning. In fact, such was the intensity of the cold after nightfall, that our guides refused to go on; nor do I believe we could have borne it ourselves. The thermometer must have been many degrees below zero; and there was a slight moving of the air at times, which played about our faces and our persons like a blast from the throat of death itself.

A good fire and a tolerable dinner revived and enabled us to face the enemy by one o'clock in the morning of the 2d of February; but I cannot describe to you the anguish of cold we endured throughout these dreary morning hours, and till long after sunrise. The heavy air actually felt as if it would take away our breath; and head, face, and garments were instantly covered with ice from the floating rime, and from our own breath. During the first half

of the stage we proceeded slowly, for the track was not always perceptible, and we had some trouble, as usual, with our load-horses. But the latter part, after morning broke, we got over much more rapidly, and reached Erzeroom about half-past nine o'clock; that is, we did the nine Turkish hours in about eight of time; tolerable work under such circumstances.

In addition to the limestone of the previous days, we observed brown laminated sandstone, crumbling to pieces with facility, and composing, as it seemed from one or two spots laid bare by the wind, a considerable portion of the soil; indeed, whatever morsel of earth was visible was of a dark red tinge. We also observed some very singularly formed rocks, but their nature I know not, as they were too far from the track in which we moved to judge of it: but the geology of this part of the country would be found, as I suspect, well worth examining.

I need not, as I take it, enlarge to you upon the pleasure with which we saw ourselves once more beneath a Christian roof, and heard ourselves addressed in our own language—where we met with many of the comforts of which we had been for some time deprived, and, above all, a hearty welcome. Mr. Zohrab, the British Consular Agent, received us indeed with abundant and cordial hospitality, and much did we enjoy our temporary respite from labours both mental and corporeal: *mental*, I say emphatically, for you are not to believe that, in a journey like this, fatigue is confined to the body alone. It is the mental anxiety and

toil which is severest and hardest to bear. To face a bitter day in England may be painful, but, in general, a temporary discomfort is the worst of it; but when it comes to exposing yourself, and those who are bound to follow you, day after day, and night after night, to the inclemency of a winter in these Alpine and almost desert regions, where a gust of wind or a shower of snow may put an end to the whole party, and close your own account of duty or of enterprise—and to continue this exertion, when lassitude and want of rest have dulled the energies and diminished the moral as well as the physical powers, is an effort of which those alone who have made it can be qualified to judge. Much do Bonham and I hug ourselves at having, as we hope, got over the worst of our difficulties; swearing, however, in good set terms, that the road betweeen Constantinople and Erzeroom has seen the last of us, and that they may make Tatar's meat of us if ever we are caught trying a winter journey *Tatar* again. Yet are we well in health; we thrive on dirt and vermin, which occasion us to relish a bath now and then, or a cleaner lodging and better fare; and we content ourselves with longing for our month's quiet at Tehran, where we shall no longer have to flog and spur jaded Turkish post-horses day and night, or herd with insolent and brutal Soorajees.

LETTER VI

Erzeroom. — Russian benefits. — Turkish Officers and Soldiers. — Ancient buildings. — Leave Erzeroom. — Hassan Kallah. — Dellee Baba. — Pass of Dehâ. — Struggles in snow. — Topra Kallah. — Karaklissia. — Koords. — Euch-Klissia. — A bitter night and cold reception. — Diadeen. — Koordish Soorajees. — Ararat. — Bayazeed. — Koordish Guides. — The Kazlee-geul. — Defeated by snow. — Retrograde movement. — A struggle for Lodgings. — A feast. — Koordish moderation. — Koordish guards. — Return to Bayazeed. — Lodgings there. — A singular rencontre. — Unavoidable delay.

Bayazeed, 11th February 1833.

DEAR ——,

IF you examine Macdonald Kinnear's map of Asia Minor and Armenia, you may find, on the south side of Mount Ararat, the place from which I now write. A wild mountain-fortress it is, and good reason have I to remember it and pour on it my malison, for to me it has been a stumbling-block and a cause of much vexation, and, as I anticipate, of great delay. Here we are storm-staid at last—snowed up, like the folks in certain tales that you wot of—and in the hands of fellows who, if they dared, would fain bring our journey to a termination by stripping us of everything we possess. My whole journey, from Constantinople, till the moment when I write, has been a continued period of discomfort and fatigue

and anxiety, such as I never before, under any circumstances, experienced.

When I wrote you last from Erzeroom, we hoped by this time to be at or near Tabreez; yet scarcely have we been able to reach this place, and every stage has been disputed foot by foot with the snow: in fact, so desperate has the cold been, that we were forced to abandon travelling by night for the most part; we could not get the people to move; and, to say the truth, neither they nor we could have stood it. Even the bitterness of the early morning and late evening hours was scarcely to be borne; nor will you be surprised at this, when I tell you that the cold varied from ten to fifteen degrees, and even as low as twenty degrees, *below zero* of Fahrenheit. But you will expect a more particular account of our progress, and a few words about Erzeroom, the capital of Armenia.

On entering and riding through the city we had been struck with its miserable condition: half the houses were apparently in ruins, the other half in most squalid disrepair. Of the shops, not a third were open in the bazars: but this was partly occasioned by the inclement season; for not only was it the Ramazan, when most Mahometans sleep during the day, but the cold had so benumbed the rest that few ventured out either to buy or to sell.

Erzeroom, until destroyed by the Russians in 1828-9, had been a flourishing place, and the great mart of trade, particularly for the purchase of European commodities by Persian traders, who used to come here for their investments instead of proceeding to Constantinople. But when the Russians overran

the country, they, by a specious pretence of deliverance from Mahometan thraldom, partly prevailed and partly forced all the Armenian families of this place, of Byaboot, and the neighbourhood, to leave their homes and enter the Russian territories. Upwards of ninety thousand souls are said to have been thus carried off from Turkish Armenia, of whom more than seven thousand were from Erzeroom : and from what I afterwards heard and saw, I do not believe this estimate is beyond the truth. They were driven by the orders of Prince (then Count) Paskevitch into Russian Armenia, the population of which had become scanty under their mild parental sway, upon an understanding that they were to be distributed in towns and villages which required such a transfusion of human life, and were to be protected and encouraged in the exercise of their several trades and avocations ; but, by a singular and most heartless inconsistency, not only was this virtual promise broken, but the poor creatures were suffered to remain encamped and exposed to the severities of the weather, without even a provision of bread to eat, so that they died by hundreds of misery and want. At last they were sent to Akhiska and the provinces of the Black Sea, where they were disposed of in places already fully peopled, so that their condition, thus huddled up in crowds, was little improved, and their usefulness utterly destroyed. Many more died here from want and from diseases occasioned by the swamps of these places, in constitutions accustomed to the free air of the upper plains ; yet, still every application of the poor creatures for permission to

return was rejected, and such as were caught deserting were severely punished. It is, therefore, no wonder that the feeling all over Turkish Armenia should be strong against the Russians, and I believe it to be as bitter as possible. It is said, now, that the escape of the poor exiles that remain, and who are looked upon now as a charge rather than a benefit, is winked at, though not openly permitted, and that many of the survivors are gradually returning to their homes. Thus this barbarous and most inconsistently prosecuted measure of state failed utterly of any effect, except that of exciting hatred and dread; but it is an inconsistency by no means without parallel or precedent in the political history of that ambitious and arbitrary government.

Sunday, the 3d of February, the day after our arrival, we devoted, as in duty bound, chiefly to rest; but as our departure was fixed for the morrow, we were forced to attend to certain arrangements connected with our progress. To effect these was no easy matter. The snow, we were assured, was not less, at all events between Erzeroom and Tabreez, than we had found it in the country to the westward; it is a very mountainous track, with many high and dangerous passes in the road; and the difficulty of procuring horses from the Koordish villages on the way, at all times great, would, we were aware, be aggravated tenfold by the rigours of the season. The country between Erzeroom and Khoee is at all times a disturbed and dangerous tract, inhabited by wild Koordish tribes, who are thieves by habit and profession, and who

neither own nor pay allegiance to any authority beyond a limited regard to their own respective chieftains — themselves as arrant robbers as any of their followers.

In such a country firmauns from sultan or pashah are but waste paper; the only security for a traveller is to be found in proceeding with a caravan, the conductors of which have made their bargain with the tribes that infest the road, and have purchased a precarious safety by the payment of a certain "black mail," or in taking with him guides and guards of the country, and trusting to his own firmness and their honesty to make good his way. The last is sometimes found a frail reed to trust to; for the conciliation of one tribe may prove anything rather than a safeguard against others, who, if they believed the booty to be worth the risk, would have no scruple whatever in wresting it from the hands of their brethren. Now, in this country, like as in others, "Hawks dinna pike out hawks e'en," and Koords do not much fancy coming to blows with Koords, and running the risk of blood feuds for a stranger, even when their words may be pledged to him, so that I leave you to guess how much of confidence a traveller can place in such guards. The Koords, too, hate all Turks, as the conquered yet proud hate their conquerors; and though the occasional passage of Tatars through the country has familiarized them to the sight of these officials, they do not like them; and the Tatars, on their part, return the full complement of detestation, combined with no small mingling of fear.

They hate this part of the journey, where they have no control; where much money and many fair words are the only means of procuring horses, and where they risk having their throats cut for the specie they often have to carry. But in this, as in all other cases, there is an action and reaction—a sort of power of compensation which necessity calls into operation: these plunderers, discovering that robbing and murdering every traveller that comes their way was knocking their own trade upon the head, came to a sort of conventional compromise, by which the safety of travellers is increased, but their purse is left at the discretion of these conscientious banditti.

Thus, to determine, at such a season, on the best mode of proceeding to Tabreez, though only four hundred miles distant, became a matter of some anxiety. There were but two ways of it: one to continue posting, and take our chance of being able to find horses at whatsoever price the Koords might demand, and with all the chances of delay which such a course would involve; the other, to agree with a muleteer to take us through with the same cattle in a certain number of days, and for a certain price, so as to rid ourselves of all trouble and responsibility. The latter, had we been able to induce a muleteer to undertake it in ten, or even twelve days, might have been the best mode in every point of view; but, after much inquiry and negotiation, we failed in finding one who would pledge himself to *any* time; and, therefore, the matter terminated in a resolution to put our trust in Providence, and

continue, as we had hitherto done, to post; but such are the dilatory habits of Orientals, that not only Sunday but part of Monday elapsed before our arrangements were concluded.

In the mean time we looked about us, and saw what we were told was best worth seeing in this ancient city, of which we obtained a good bird's-eye view from the top of an old tumble-down tower in the castle. It presented us with an area, I should say, as large as that of Sheerauz, (I fear that comparison may not render the thing much plainer to you), but covered with a melancholy waste of ruins. The castle itself was in little better case, except the walls, which are kept in just such a state of repair as to prevent them from falling to pieces. The gates of this castle are guarded from the intrusion of strangers with sufficient watchfulness; but it is rather with a view to extracting from their pockets a portion of their coin, than from any soldier-like principle of caution. We were stopped by one of the new Nizam, or regular soldiers, until our guide brought an officer, evidently of considerable rank, who gained us instant admission; but who, although he proved to be no less than the commandant of artillery himself, did not disdain the humble guerdon of ten piastres, or about two shillings of sterling money, tendered him by our Armenian guide. On the contrary, he received it with infinite graciousness, and left us with repeated "Khoosh gueldeniz." But the rogue had laid his plans more deeply than we knew of; for, as he issued from the gateway, he gave an order, in which

the word *Buksheesh* was emphatically audible, and the effect of which was to throw the bayonets of a couple of sentries across, so as to bar all passage when we attempted to follow. We remonstrated; but the fellows regularly refused to permit of our escape, until we had doled out some five piastres more, of which the worthy commandant, no doubt, pocketed the lion's share. It was one of the coolest proceedings I ever saw; for they actually bullied us out of our money as if they had been enforcing a right.

There are in Erzeroom several stone structures of considerable antiquity, which, had weather and time permitted, might have proved worthy of more attention; but we could examine only two. One, which has been made an arsenal of, is built of hewn-stone, and is beautifully decorated, somewhat in the Saracenic style. It is a long quadrangle, once, no doubt, covered in with a roof, and terminating at the upper end in a domed apartment, into which entrance was obtained from below by a marble gateway highly adorned. This gateway was ordered to be removed by General Paskevitch, in order to be sent to St. Petersburgh. Along the walls were two ranges of cells, one above the other, as in Mahometan *Medresahs;* and the most probable conjecture regarding the place is, that it has been a college of Dervishes, attached to a fine mosque in the neighbourhood. There is neither any appearance of the cross, nor of verses from the Koran, to be found on this structure, from which deficiency we may infer that it was not intended either for church or mosque.

Traces of demolition by the Russians are to be seen in every part of it; and the wreck of stores and arms which they could not carry away, and would not leave unharmed, are strewed in every corner.

The mosque just mentioned is in the same style, and doubtless of the same age: a shilling apiece procured us admission. It is a quadrangle, supported on arcades of five arches by seven, and is a fine old structure. Some of the domes, particularly the centre one, is massively but beautifully sculptured.

During these two days the weather was by no means encouraging. Snow-showers were frequent, and the air was so thick that we could not distinguish the mountains nearest to the city; while the temperature continued many degrees below zero. On the morning of the 4th of February, however, we again committed ourselves to its tender mercies, quitting the kind Mr. Zohrâb at a little after three in a most promising fall of snow, and pitch-dark. The consequence, as might have been anticipated, was, that we had scarcely gotten a mile from the city-gates when we lost our way, and could neither find it nor the city again, and soon stabled our horses comfortably up to their necks in a snow-wreath, where we were forced to leave them until morning broke, for fear of making matters worse. You may imagine how pleasantly we felt, and how good-humoured we all were.

A pretty dismal dawn it was, too, when it came, and a fine misty prospect it disclosed of hills and swells and wreaths, to which the fast-falling flakes were rapidly adding. Over these we trudged and

floundered, with an occasional plunge into a hole, which occupied us for a pleasant twenty minutes or so,—but, on the whole, at a fair pace, to Hassan Kallah, performing the distance, six Turkish hours of space, exactly in the same of time.

Hassan Kallah is a fortress, rather ruinous, but boldly standing on a rock, that projects from a mountainous range, and overlooks not only its own town, but a wide plain, along which, having changed horses without an inordinate delay, we trotted on a tolerable track towards Dellee-baba. It appeared indeed that we were bringing the bad weather along with us, for the ground, as we advanced, had but little fresh snow; but we had enough of it before evening, for it snowed the whole blessed day, and we lost our daylight, and the way together, at some distance from the village. The barking of a dog and a light from one of the doors, the most welcome sight or sound we had met with the whole day, relieved us at last from a state of anxiety that had become our *evening* rather than our daily fare, and led us to the place over hollows and ditches among which we had many falls; one of these nearly finished our Tatar.

It was nine at night before we got lodged, perishing with cold, and regular moving pillars of snow; and here we resolved, with a good grace, to remain for the night; for to move the people of the place from their warm nests would have been a hopeless attempt, had we even felt ourselves able to bide the chance of losing our way, and digging the horses out of snow-pits till morning for our amusement So,

entering the huge cavern-like domicile of a wealthy Don of the village, an Armenian—like them all, for here are few Turks—we made ourselves snug for the night. Our lodging was truly a capital specimen of this sort of Armenian tabernacle — an interminable set of great vaults, that might do duty for a Spanish inquisition ; and which did not resemble such a place the less from the crowds of dark-capped and bearded figures that were seen dimly flitting about by the red torch-light. Of this mighty habitation, all we could see, on approaching it, was the huge black entrance, yawning wide in the white snow, like the open mouth of a great white bear. The heat and smell of the buffaloes were intolerable, and we spent a most unrefreshing night among myriads of fleas.

Snow fell fast all night — more than a foot deep, they told us in the morning. I awoke at five, but could not get the party on foot till seven. In prowling about before daylight, I went to a wrong door, and stumbled into a huge apartment with a lofty and really handsome roof, constructed of beams narrowing into something like what we call a coach-roof at home, and with a colonnade of wooden pillars all round. It was the women's room, and there were a dozen or two of them lying higgledy-piggledy, along with quantities of children, on a raised platform at the top of the room, around the fire-place ; and a few lambs and sheep were trotting about in the other parts of it. One of the women seeing me, instead of being alarmed, or making an uproar, came up and asked me for some sugar for her child ; and one of the men, seeing me hesitate at entering, not

only offered no objection, but asked me to go in. I dare say the room was fifty feet long by twenty-eight to thirty feet broad, and at least eleven or twelve high.

The morning was clear, but bitter, bitter cold,—and severely we felt it as we made our way along a valley to a curious gorge—a fine banditti-like scene, just fit for a painter, and began gradually to ascend a high pass. It was that of Dehâ, a mountain famous, or rather infamous, for its difficulty, and the number of cattle and men lost on it every winter. The side, however, on which we commenced our ascent being to windward, was tolerably clear of wreaths, and we reached the miserable hamlet of Dehâ, which gives its name to the pass, by noon. It was at this place our difficulties commenced. The long laborious ascent from the village to the top of the mountain was covered very deeply with tough old snow, in which the horses soon began to sink and get entangled. In a little it became one continued struggle; for as fast as one horse was extricated from the hole he had sunk into, another stuck fast; to dig him out, unload, carry his baggage to a sound place, and load him again, cost time. Sometimes, even while we were loading him again, a false step aside from the narrow path, and down he went once more, and all our work was to do over again,—it was "labour-in-vain hill" in good earnest; and the day went away so rapidly in these hard struggles, which exhausted horse and man, that I feared we should not get over the crest of the mountain while the light lasted. We fought it foot by foot.

It was by dint of incessant exertion, and constant, unwearied perseverance, in unloading and carrying forward the bags and portmanteaus to firmer ground, that we gained the gorge; but a difficulty greater than we had calculated on awaited us there. The fresh snow from the weather-side of the pass, drifted by the wind, had accumulated on the lee-side to such an extent that Heaven only knows how deep it was. Track there was none; the drift had obliterated every trace of it; and we had nothing left for it but to prick at random for a path. It was a service of no little anxiety and danger to make the first attempt; and the little earnest consultation that was hurriedly held just on the ridge reminded one of those eager and rapid councils of war that are called forth by critical junctures, where a breach has to be stormed, or an assault that has failed is to be repeated.

At length, one of the Soorajees, after due examination, pushed forth into the unbroken snow, and down he went incontinently, horse and man disappearing in the deep wreath, until brought up by some solid body either of snow or earth under the loose drift, where, after shaking his ears, he got up and stood looking at us, and we at him, with no small perplexity. After a minute, the other Soorajee, dismounting, tried the enterprise on foot, but with somewhat worse success. He found no bottom, and after a desperate struggle, like that of a drowning man, he dragged himself over the surface to join his comrade.

In the mean time, the Soorajee's horse, thus left

by its master with no one to look after it, thought fit to make a trial on its own account. Down it floundered into the ready-made hole, as over a precipice; but the snow having been broken by its predecessor, gave way more easily, and being unincumbered, the animal by a vigorous and continued struggle and the downward inclination of the ground made its way to where the two Soorajees stood, among the loud and encouraging shouts of the wholy party.

The Tatar next, as in duty bound, undertook the enterprise: but, heavy as he was with clothes, accoutrements, and snow, his little Koordish nag was quite unable to fight against bad footing and top-weight, and down they both went as if they had plunged into water; and when they reappeared it was separate, — the heavy Janissary cloak of the Tatar converted into a robe of snow, and the little Koord plunging and kicking till it got out of the hollow and joined its companions. Both Soorajees, now, doffing their looser garments, turned to, and, climbing up, sought to regain the summit, where we stood freezing, like bottles of wine put to cool, in the vile cutting wind that was drifting the snow in clouds around us. They trampled down the snow as they came, and by dint of passing and repassing, rendered it firm enough, as it appeared, to resist anything. Alas! — the first load-horse, which, by-the-by, was the heaviest one, broke the delusion and the specious crust together, and it ended, as usual, in being forced to relieve him of his load, and carry it, or rather drag it on the surface of the snow,

to solid ground. The others were got over this first gap by a similar process, and we Tchelebees led our horses down, ourselves getting our full share of the snow-bath on the way.

What time this conflict occupied you may imagine, as well as our nervous uneasiness as we saw the sun declining fast. The rest of the route for several miles was just a succession of such jobs; and at one place one of the load-horses slipping over the solid part of the path as we were going gingerly along the face of a steep hill, fairly fetched way and rolled down portmanteaus and all for about one hundred and fifty feet, carrying with him an avalanche of snow. We lost near an hour by this accident, and all hands were obliged to work hard in bringing the exhausted animal up to the path again, and the bags were carried upon the shoulders of the Soorajees. Another of these miserable beasts of burthen played us the same prank further down the pass, just at sunset, and I thought we were to have had a battle-royal between the Soorajees, who quarrelled both about the road and their respective share of the work. It was no wonder that night closed in upon us long before we cleared the mountain—the wonder was that we cleared it at all — and it was late before we got housed in a little Koordish village called Seideekhan (or Seyedkhan), near the bottom of the valley.

To describe all we suffered this day from cold and anxiety would be impossible. The actual and obvious danger of our situation was sufficient of itself to alarm us; but when to that was added the para-

lysis of mental and physical powers from extremity of cold, it is no wonder that gloomy thoughts would come into the brain. Oh! how often as night was shutting in, while our struggles were still increasing, and excluding, as it seemed, every ray of hope—how often did that beautiful 107th Psalm come into my mind,—for they who travel in the distant land, and in seasons of darkness and doubt, see "the works of the Lord, and his wonders!"—not less than those "that go down to the sea in ships, and that do business in great waters." They also "reel to and fro"—and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses; — then are they glad because they be quiet: so he bringeth them unto their desired haven" — and well may they "praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

And they do praise him, — deeply and fervently do they give thanks.—Oh, believe me, it is not in the imposing calm of the church or the cathedral, that devotion is always most ardent; nor is it by those alone who are blessed with the enjoyment of security and ease that praise and thanksgiving are fervently offered up. Too true it is that a life of toil and labour, when the mind is kept for ever on the stretch by anxiety and needful exertion, may render us for a time unmindful of our duty, — but in the hour of danger and distress— of trouble and perplexity, who is there that does not turn to his Maker, and seek in humble earnestness for help in need from that source where alone

it is to be found?—Yes, many an ardent and sincere prayer is breathed in the midnight march and by the wayworn traveller; and they do not ascend unheeded. The Almighty, who hath himself encouraged us to call upon him in trouble,—who "knoweth whereof we are made," and who "remembereth that we are but dust,"—forgives the forgetfulness of his weak and sinful creatures in their brief hours of prosperity and ease, and when the dark day comes and forces them to turn to where their help lies, he listens to their cry and bringeth them out of their distresses.

Our lodging this night was in a house similar in construction to that of last night, but smaller, and evidently belonging to a poorer proprietor; but it was more comfortable because cooler, and less crowded with men and animals. These Armenian villages differ not less in their appearance from the Turkish ones than do the respective people from each other. The houses of the latter are all above-ground, their penthouse and overhanging tiled-roofs giving them an Italian air; but within they are cold and open in comparison of the former, which, though scarcely visible above the ground, are far more warm, spacious, and comfortable within. When we came this day upon the hamlet of Dehâ, all that caught our observation was what appeared to be a group of rugged black stones rising out of the snow. It was the village however,—God save the mark! or rather a number of pyramidal heaps of dung-cakes built among the houses, interspersed with heaps of straw or fodder, that looked far more like huts than the

real tabernacles; for it was not from them, but from holes in the ground, like rabbits from their burrows, that men and women and children popped forth in abundance, and as wild as any beasts of the forest. You are not to suppose that the heaps of dried dung are intended, as in Christian lands, for manure to the ground: such is by no means the case. Cows, buffaloes, and horses, are made use of like machines, to convert their straw to fuel after extracting its nutriment. They collect and knead their dung into cakes, some four inches thick, which, when dried, are built up into the said pyramids like peat-stacks; a species of fuel which they much resemble, though they by no means make so brisk and clear a fire.

About five in the morning of the 7th the Tatar called us to breakfast: I had tried to waken him half-a-dozen times before without effect. We were off before daylight, however, and held along a path so level that we almost regretted not having continued our way the evening before; but the prudence of our decision was justified long before we reached Tourpa (or Topra) Kallah, by finding ourselves embarrassed by a great tract of ice-running water, proceeding from a rivulet and some springs which the frost had caused to overflow, and which, in the dark, would have been a sad business. Meanwhile, the sun arose in a splendid and almost cloudless sky, to illuminate one of the prettiest, if not most imposing, winter landscapes we had seen since entering the snow. The village of Moollah Suleimaun, which we were just passing, is situated on the verge of a fine plain, surrounded by mountains,

above the summits of which, to the eastward, rose the noble peak of Ararat, just capped with a cloud. We had seen him in great majesty from the top of the pass of yesterday; and there was a fine *sahrâb*, or *mirage*, at the lower end of the plain, which reflected the glorious sunrise, giving life to a scene that might otherwise have appeared too inanimate; for it was snow, snow, everywhere snow—a white and weary waste.

Proceeding along the edge of this plain, which in 1822 was the scene of the defeat of the Turkish army by the Persians under the late Prince Royal, we reached Topra Kallah, which, like Hassan Kallah, is one of these peninsulated hills connected with a range of mountains, that, when they afford water, seem always to have been greedily seized upon as military positions, and rise over the town at their feet, which they command as well as protect. Both fortification and town bear the marks of Russian spoliation, and the latter, particularly, is very ruinous: at this time it was filled with the retainers of the Pashah of Bayazeed, to whose government it belongs. I meant to have paid him my respects; but, as it was still the Ramazan, he was in his hârem, from whence there was no chance of his moving before evening; so we sent and procured an order for horses, and about eleven o'clock in the forenoon were once more in the saddle. Wretched brutes the horses were; but the stage was a short one, and the creatures generally get on, one way or other.

As we rode along the plain, I observed a very

noble mountain, to which we must have passed very close on the previous evening, and which, as we left the hills near Topra Kallah, and got into the plain, towered above them in the full splendour of unbroken snow, to a height of at least eight or nine thousand feet. Its name, we were told, is Kiusseh Dagh; and a more nobly-formed mountain I have seldom seen. The rest of those which surround the plain, with the exception of another, called Killich Dagh, at a great distance to the south-west, though rough and savage of aspect, had no grandeur to recommend them.

We passed three villages in the plain, much like that of Dehâ and Moollah Suleimaun; just like heaps of horse-dung in a farm-yard in winter, smoking and steaming at a great rate, but without anything that could lead a stranger to suspect the existence of a human dwelling among them. Our horses, however, thought otherwise, and we could scarcely get the poor creatures past them. No sooner did we approach one, than off set the baggage-steeds, without either let or remonstrance on the part of the fellows who accompanied us and did duty as Soorajees, and who gave not the smallest assistance to reclaim them. In fact, they appeared to have come rather for the purpose of retarding than accelerating our progress; for they would scarcely let their beasts move out of a foot's pace;—an unnecessary care on their part, for one of the poor animals was dead lame, and another so weak that it was continually slipping or falling. But we had now got fairly among the Koords, who, though keen

enough to get their cattle well hired, are very unwilling to have them worked, and who insist upon accompanying them all the way, to take care that you do not overpress them. They seem a rough, uncivilized race, very little less savage than the fierce, large dogs with which every village swarms.

We reached Karaklissia, just such a collection of grass and dung-heaps as those we had passed, by four o'clock in the afternoon, but the next being a twelve-hour stage, with much deep snow, we could not get the people to attempt it at night; indeed, starting at night has for sometime become out of the question, so here we came-to, most unwillingly, till morning, and a miserable night we had of it from heat, foul air, and vermin. Sleep was impossible, and at two in the morning I awakened the Tatar, in order to load and be off. But we have now to deal with people who take their own way; not a horse was brought till four, and they took two hours to load them, so that it was six in the morning of the 8th before we started; yet, ere we went a mile, the loads went wrong, and we had to halt and put all to rights again.

A colder morning never dawned. I am sure it was good fifteen degrees below zero, if I could have looked; everything was frozen hard as iron, and the stunning cold without doors was a desperate contrast to the stifling heat within. How the people contrived to adjust the loads I knew not; had it depended on me, there they must have lain—not a finger had I to move: furs, woollens, and all were laughed to scorn by the intense frost; it was inde-

scribably painful. Even at eleven o'clock the sun had scarcely any power; and, when he did shine out, one cheek was in a glare while the other was hacked by the cutting wind, and not an icicle of our beard was thawed.

Our road lay still along the plain, behind a range of earthy hills which intersect it. The whole, full sixty miles in length, is clearly alluvial; as are the hills, which are not more than from fifty to a hundred feet high. It is the bed of more than one stream which joins the Euphrates. The latter part of our march was almost in the bed of that river. As we pursued our way, several parties of Koords passed us, wild-looking figures, richly but fantastically dressed, and armed to the teeth with spears, swords, pistols, guns, &c. We thanked Heaven, when, after a keen scrutiny from their piercing black eyes, they returned our "salaam aleicoom," and passed on; nor could we help looking back more than once to see whether they had not turned to charge us, for they would have spitted us like black-cocks, had they thought themselves strong enough, or us worth the risk of attack.

The depth of snow increased as we went on—we were now near the sources of the Euphrates, and on the highest plateau of Armenia; but we had a good hard track, and although the regular ribbed steps worn in it by the passage of caravans made our progress slow, we still got on without so much of the eternal falling of horses and loading and unloading the baggage-cattle. Of the villages we passed, some had been totally ruined, and all more or less da-

maged by the Russians. At nine hours, or thirty-six miles, we passed the Armenian village and church of Eutch-Ecclesia,* or rather Ecclesia, one would say, for it has but one church, and a singular fabric it is, one thousand four hundred years old, built in the usual cruciform shape, with a multitude of irregular ekes and additions, forming a curious whole, which is surrounded by a wall by way of a fortification. We had no time, however, to examine it, although we halted for a few minutes, during which there was a high dispute between the Tatar and Soorajees about proceeding. The Tatar was desirous to go on, because, as he truly said, if we did not, we should just lose one whole day by the difficulty of getting horses at Diadeen, only three hours further on, and our regular halting-place; whereas, by pushing on this night, we should get from thence at once to Bayazeed to-morrow. The Soorajees, on the other hand, cowed by the cold and the approach of night, which was just coming on, did all they could to fix us where we were, in which they were supported by the priests of the church, who hoped to get some pickings from us; and if the truth must be told, there was a little lazy devil in our own hearts, who pointed to the red setting sun, and held up a visionary thermometer with the index at heaven knows how much below Zero, who whispered to us of sufferings and losses of noses and toes, and whose suggestions were enforced by the pain of our already tingling extremities. But the Tatar was steady for once, and we could not deny that he was right. So

* Or the Three Churches.

away we went, turning our backs upon the cheerful warm blaze that had been kindled for us, driving on the unwilling baggage-cattle, which the sulky Soorajees would not take charge of; indeed, they threatened to leave us altogether, though in the end they thought better of it and followed us.

Seriously, it was not without some very ugly forebodings that we filed out of the gateway, just as the crimson disk of the sun was falling below the distant hill of snow. It was as cold as in the morning; fiercely cold — cold as death itself, with every prospect of increasing; and having had bitter experience of the danger and difficulty, as well as the distress of night-travelling in snow, especially with such inefficient attendants, I own that the measure did appear to me somewhat hazardous, but the Tatar was confident, and on we went. It would be vain to attempt a description of our sufferings this night—they did not fall short of our worst anticipations. It was about eleven o'clock, when, weary and sick, and numbed, our eyes were gladdened by a sight of the heaps and ruins of Diadeen, looking, when we reached them, just like a parcel of black stones scattered about upon the snow, but looming strangely through the frost-mist that rose from the stream and hollows of the valley. They were the only objects that served to distinguish the earth from the grey threatening sky.

But our difficulties were not at an end here. We reached the centre of these miserable heaps of ruins, but, except the occasional howl of a dog, all was silent as the tomb. Not a house could we find

to go to—the inhabitants, if any there were, seemed resolute in sleep, and none of us knew where to seek for them. It was now that we acknowledged and felt the value of the dirty Turkish post-houses we had so often despised, with their dirtier but ready Cahwahjees. What would we now have given for one to receive us, or for one of the greasy rogues to minister to us;—now, as we stood frozen under the lee of a ruined wall, while one Soorajee shouted out for the Chiaoosh, and the other went lazily after the load-horses, which, poor brutes, were volunteering a search for a stable.

More than half an hour elapsed before we were led to a black chasm, which proved the entrance to as miserable a hole of a lodging as you can well imagine—no light, no fire, the people all asleep, or obviously indisposed to accommodate us; and we were actually beginning to despair of anything beyond shelter from the blast, when the Chiaoosh, who had been summoned from the house of the Beg, or governor of the place, came in and roused up our unwilling hosts with a vengeance. A light was then, at length, procured, and we followed it into a small room, the floor of which was covered with a dozen or twenty individuals of the human species, and of all genders, for what we could see, sleeping promiscuously, heads and tails, upon a few mats. Our entry made a deuce of a stir amongst them: the stick went to work, and up they got, some naked, others very scantily clothed, running this way and that, like drunken creatures, till at length the whole were bundled out, and we came forward to occupy

their warm nests. Numuds and carpets, and pillows, however, were produced at the summons of the indefatigable Chiaoosh. A fire was lighted, and after a little while, with infinite delight, we felt ourselves begin to thaw. To complete our comfort coffee was produced, and followed in a moderate time by a tolerable pillaw: and, at length, weary and sleepy, we sunk to rest.

We were now in the house of a Koord, and strange fellows in some respects we found them: at once independent and cringing — hospitable in manner, but in heart greedy in the extreme. To-day, for instance, I was not more surprised at the violent abuse which our Tatar lavished on our sulky Soorajees, than at the coolness and unconcern with which these fellows, who all hold themselves to be gentlemen, *agas* forsooth! received it. To be sure, they may have taken the whole as words of course, mere expletives, the inconsistency of which neutralized their insulting nature; for at one time they were scoundrels, sons of dogs, and all that was vile and infamous; and the next moment they were *Jannum*, "my life—my soul!" But all was of no avail; flattery or abuse were alike ineffectual. It is the same in all pecuniary dealings, whether the matter in hand be bargain or reward. They will try every possible shift to screw a little more from you than their right; but when they find you firm, it is amusing to see how they content themselves with what they get. These very Soorajees first abused the Tatar grossly for the smallness of the present he offered them, tried everything to

squeeze out another piastre or two, first for themselves, and then for a fellow who had accompanied us all the way on foot to look after his own mare; then, finding him deaf to their appeals, they dropped the subject, kissed his hand, prayed God to bless him and us, and left us, apparently perfectly well satisfied, and wishing us all manner of success.

By-the-by, I never saw fondness for a dumb animal carried to a greater length than by this poor pedestrian, this fellow-traveller of ours. His only errand in walking these fifty long miles in deep snow and desperate cold, during which he constantly kept pace with us, was to watch over the welfare of this favourite mare, one of the horses which we had hired, and which Bonham rode. This was "Love strong as death," indeed, for most men would have thought it braving death, and to many the cold and fatigue would probably have proved fatal.

We awoke in good time on the morning of the ninth, after a sounder sleep than usual; but it was to little purpose, for no horses had been procured, though the Chiaoosh had been charged with, and had promised to perform, this duty on the preceding night. The Beg of Diadeen, who is brother to the Pashah, seemed little inclined to regard the orders of that chief, for infinite were the difficulties and delays which we found in getting them executed; and when, by dint of remonstrance, and threatening, and coaxing, an order for the requisite number of horses was obtained from this functionary, those that were offered were so wretched that we were

forced to reject them; and Mr. Bonham, who could talk better Turkish than I, accompanied the Tatar to the Serai, in order to press the matter effectually. It was finally arranged by the production of certain steeds from the Beg's own stable, the hire charged for which was exactly in an inverse ratio to their efficiency; but the delay was far more vexatious than the imposition, for the day was fine, and it was of great importance that we should reach Bayazeed, a long and difficult stage of nine hours, before night.

During the absence of the Tatar and Bonham, as I sat watching the baggage, there rushed in an old Koordish dame followed by a whole shoal of young folks; I suppose their errand was to see the stranger; but the former, by way of excuse, went to the fire-place, as if she came for fire: the others did not affect any, but fell at once to peering and prying about like crows into a bone, and jabbering away like a parcel of young monkeys. Then down they sat, and commenced preparations for a journey I suppose; for they stuffed their raw sheepskin buskins with hay to keep the soles of their feet from the cold. This is the common practice; and they further wrap the limb from toe to mid-leg with strips of cloth or bits of rag, just as I have described the Turkish Soorajees to do, and cram the whole into the aforesaid sock, which is gathered up with cords and tied round the ankles. Above this goes the shulwars, or loose Turkish breeches, common to all ranks and classes, which completes the outfit of the lower man.

It was ten o'clock A.M. before we mounted, and it cost us another half-hour to get our wretched beasts, which seemed scarcely able to drag along their own carcasses, clear of the village. The ignorant or unwilling guides would drive instead of leading them, and kept swearing and storming, in good Koordish no doubt, or gazing idly about them, while the creatures bolted and ran among the huts, and every way but the right one, with an agility that their appearance belied, throwing off their ill-tied loads in the snow, till at length the Tatar, with the help of some of the inhabitants, got them to rights, and into the beaten track in the snow, from which it was difficult for them to swerve. You have no notion how fretting are such delays, while the precious day light is fast passing away, to those who know the bitterness of night-work. Oh how we cursed the supineness of these idle and inefficient vagabonds, and wished for one of those impudent but active and knowing rogues we had so often abused and consigned to the evil one!—but there are no such clever rogues in Koordistan.

Soon after clearing the village, we slowly ascended a pass, from the top of which we looked down upon a brilliant white plain, at the further end of which Mount Ararat arose in cloudless glory—all glittering in unbroken snow, and, as it seemed, close to us. He is a grand fellow, certainly; and freezing though it was, I longed to take his dimensions, and the outline of the whole scene, snow and all; but with such guides, we did not dare to linger,—it might have cost us a night in the snow, and our lives.

From the foot of the pass we had a weary tramp across one plain, deep, deep in snow; and then through a sort of defile, among a mass of craggy hills of basaltic rock, some of them exhibiting columnar appearances, till we debouched upon the great plain which runs quite to the foot of Ararat, perhaps thirty miles across; and along this we rode more smartly, to the foot of the mountain on which is perched the town of Bayazeed.

This is truly a singular place. A jutting rock, projecting from a high and most rugged mountain cut into thousands of ravines, is crowned by its castle. The city is built among the clefts on either side, and you do not see half of it until you climb up and get into it as into a bird's nest. One wonders what tempted men to choose a spot so unpromising for a city, even in regard to security; for not only is it commanded from all sides, but the inhabitants themselves have a most difficult ascent to surmount every time they leave and return to their homes, with the thousand other inconveniences that must attach to so lofty a dwelling. Except in India, I never saw so sharp and vile an ascent to a fort; and the pathways being covered with ice, it was a miracle how our smooth-shod horses got up, and that we escaped falls. When we had made good our entry we rode up and down, for a very long time as it appeared to us, for the night had got dark, and the paths were infamously bad, among what had once been houses, but now were ruins—all ruins; they had been the houses of the poor Armenians carried off by the Russians, and a dismal sight it was. Yet Bayazeed

before this blow must have been a fine and populous as well as a large town.

We were carried to the fortress or palace, which is a handsome building of hewn stone, so far as the imperfect light enabled us to perceive, and there we were detained for half an hour, until the Tatar procured an order for lodging us. As usual, this lodging was in the stable of an Armenian, crowded with horses and cattle, and stifling hot and close. This in a town seemed singular entertainment, and we remonstrated against it; upon which the Chiaoosh who had been sent to attend upon us offered us the choice of another. But it was by that time late, and, dubious from all accounts whether the change was likely to be to our advantage, we grumbled and growled a bit, and concluded by establishing ourselves where we were for the night.

Curiosity soon filled the place, and after a little while we, who were desirous of rest, were sorely annoyed by a loud and continuous jabbering in Koordish, not one word of which was intelligible to us; but we found that these were the owners of horses come to bargain for the hire of the animals with which we were to proceed in the morning. It soon appeared that the measure of their consciences was exactly the presumed extent of our necessity—they insisted on just four times the lawful hire; but what could we do, except that which at length we did, stormed and blustered—swore we would complain to the Pashah, and, under that protest, finally paid the demand.

In the morning, after the full customary measure

of delay, the loads were at length adjusted, and we started. The stage to Agajeek is always a trying one, for, besides the long steep pass of that name, there is a wearisome mountain valley upon a very high level, called the Kazlee-geul, which is notorious for the depth of its snow, and consequently for its danger in winter. To this place there are two roads from Bayazeed; the one, a short cut leading over a high mountain, and, as we were told, impassable at this time from the quantity of snow that had lately fallen; the other, a circuitous one, to reach which it was necessary to retrace about twelve miles of the way we had yesterday come, was the general caravan road, which led by a village named Kizzil-Deezah. By this, however, it became necessary to go, and we accordingly set forth, our party being strengthened by the presence of four Koordish guards, who, being the owners of the horses, accompanied us not only as guides but as protectors. For the latter duty they might be qualified, and, so far as arms went, were so; but neither they nor their horses appeared to have the smallest notion of the services we had hired them to perform, for the latter ran hither and thither with no other object, as it might seem, than that of seeking to get quit of their loads; while their owners not only were ignorant of that essential duty of a Soorajee which consists in tying on the baggage well, but as soon as we were fairly under weigh, set off in front, brandishing their spears and bellowing out Koordish songs, as if they were the *masters*, we the *men*. And truly a sore business had we of it, Tchelebees,

Tatar and all, in keeping the ill-trained brutes from bolting round at every step, and floundering from off the path into the snow.

From the foot of the Bayazeed hill to the bottom of the first ascent along the plain, we had a well-marked road, and when once fairly started, got on at a good pace; but as we ascended, not only did the snow become deeper, but we found that a heavy fall had freshly taken place in the higher grounds, which had drifted so as to fill up the track made by the caravans, so that our guards had great difficulty in finding the road. We contrived however to make it out with a good deal of falling and floundering and digging out of horses, so that by high noon we reached the top, where, instead of an immediate descent, we found ourselves upon a long inclined plain, very deeply covered with unbroken snow, here and there heaped in long irregular drift-beds. This was the Kazlee-geul, a place I shall long remember.

We struggled on with an increasing effort, making our own path along the foot of the left-hand rocks which bounded the plain on that side, and had reached a deep cleft, whence issued a little stream that formed a small cascade as it descended into the plain. The cascade had been arrested by the frost, and was one grotesque mass of ice; and the snow had drifted into the water-course below it, filling it level with the plain in which it ran, and covering that portion near the rocks to an unknown depth. Here our horses stuck fast, and in order to extricate them we had to unload and drag the packages along

the surface of the snow for a long way; but still no track or practicable route for the horses was to be found. The guards dismounting, went plunging hither and thither in search of the old track, but whether from ignorance or timidity, they could make nothing of it, and all returned discomfited. This was comfort!—and to add to the pleasures of anticipation, a heavy snow-cloud which obscured the sun, and had been spitting for some time, began to give us its contents in earnest.

All was black enough, when for a moment we had a glimpse of hope; for two Persians on horseback, well-mounted, taking advantage of our track, came up and proposed themselves as guides. Their stronger horses plunged through, though with great difficulty, and they went on; but our guards, in attempting to follow, got fairly fast in the snow. Our load-horses refused to move a step, and lay down utterly exhausted. The people got disheartened—evening was fast coming on—what was to be done? Attempt after attempt was made in advance, but every forward movement served only to show that all hopes of conquering the worst half of the way, which yet remained, was vain. The wind was already driving the new fallen and falling snow in perfect streams along the surface past us; and the choice soon very obviously lay between going back the whole desperate way we had come, from the village Kizzil-Deezah, with the additional danger of finding our tracts already obliterated by the drift,—with such sorry guides too,—and passing a night in the snow. And here again did the recollection of the impudent,

but bold and gallant, Soorajees of Karahissar and the Elma-Dagh come across us with vain longings: I am confident they would have brought us through, spite of snow and drift; but as it was, we lost much precious time, and just did nothing.

Thus, at length, the sun being scarcely an hour high, we resolved, for the first time during our journey, to turn tail, and retrace our steps; we hoped, provided no accident happened, to reach the caravan station at Kizzil-Deezah; but even of this there seemed small hope, for still were our load-horses lying half-lifeless, as it appeared, in the snow. At this very time back came one of our Persian friends to tell us, that if we would but leave our baggage where it was, he felt confident he could carry us through; that we could easily send from the station at Agajeek for them, and that they would be up with us next day. This might have been a very convenient arrangement for himself and friends, but we had not quite confidence enough either in the country or its inhabitants to trust our property to their honesty, even though guarded by the snows of the Kazleegeul. It was well we did not follow this man or his advice, for we afterwards heard that only one of these people ever reached the village, and that with the loss of his horse, which perished in the snow; the fate of the other I never distinctly heard.

It cost us "mickle toil," and nearly half our fingers, to extricate the loads and horses, and get them once more across the water-course; and when at length they were brought to comparatively sound ground and reloaded, we found, as had been anti-

cipated, that all our work was to be done over again; for not a trace of our former footsteps was to be seen. It was the first time we had been fairly, or rather *un*fairly as we thought, baffled by the snow and the poor spirit of our guards, and I cannot tell you how bitter a mortification we felt it. The toil of returning was enhanced as much by the chill of disappointment as by the depth of the drift. Night soon fell, and the darkness was thickened by the falling snow. Our customary amusement of extricating fallen horses was abundantly repeated; and our perplexity augmented by the perversity of our guides, who would attempt to find their way to a nearer village, and lost themselves and us completely. In fact, there were two parties and two opinions among them: one proposing to return to the regular caravan stage, the other desiring to make their way to a nearer village; unfortunately, for us, the latter party carried the day, and the consequence was, a protracted wandering up and down in heavy snow, with the growing conviction that our fate for the night was a lodging on the hill-side.

For ourselves we were mere ciphers; remonstrance was out of the question. We could not even explain our thoughts; in fact, so unmanageable were our guards, and so independent did they seem of all control, that I was by no means satisfied we should not be deserted, had a strong remonstrance been attempted; so we followed our blind guides like lambs led to the slaughter, until it was their pleasure to stop. At length the most welcome sound of a dog barking came borne upon the night breeze to

our ears from afar; a pistol was fired as a signal, and up again we pushed with new vigour, plunging at random through drift and hollow, and all that came in our way; even the horses, weary as they were, seemed to catch the animation of hope, and carried us bravely. At length, after crossing a ravine, a full chorus of barking burst out close upon us; and before a single object was observable that could lead us to the conclusion of our being near the abode of man, we were assailed by half-a-hundred monstrously fierce dogs, who were guarding a flock of sheep before their master's door, and who now set upon us open-mouthed. The uproar brought their masters from an invisible subterraneous den — fellows as wild as themselves, by whose exertions we succeeded in reaching the body of the place undevoured. But it did not seem by any means to follow that we had secured a lodging in thus reaching this den of wild beasts; for so long was it before the combined efforts of guards and Tatar could effect any arrangement, or find a place for our accommodation, that we were under some apprehension of being forced to go further, whatever our fare might prove.

We were stopped at one of the out-works, like enemies, in the falling snow; and there we sat on our horses watching the baggage, surrounded and watched in our turn by the savages whom curiosity had brought together, and by the formidable dogs who eyed and patrolled around us, and by their growling seemed still longing for a bite, as much as their

masters did, I am persuaded, for our property. When the negotiation was concluded, and a weary time it was, the Tatar, issuing forth from one of the yawning caverns, announced that our reception was at last prepared for. We followed him accordingly into the dark gulf, and found ourselves in an assembly of cows, horses, sheep, goats, and human beings, from among which an old man, with a long white beard, who might have represented the shepherd of Lot or Abraham, stepped forth, and seizing hold of my hand, gave me the salutation of peace, and led me into a larger cave, into which only the horses of the party were permitted to enter, and which was covered with a thick layer of dung as with a carpet. In the interior wall of this place there was a low square hole, from whence burst forth a goat or two, and into which we were directed to plunge; we did so, and found a young Koord hard at work, brushing away the thick dung of sheep and goats, and disputing possession of the premises with sundry of these animals, who were not expelled without the employment of very strong measures; indeed, one of them, a pet I presume, made the most violent remonstrances against ejection. But all was in vain; the apartment was cleared, and proved more decent than we anticipated, at least in point of height and dimensions; it was furnished with a fireplace, too, a most necessary convenience in such a night and place, — and when spread with some coarse but decent humuds, formed a very tolerable shelter for persons who had just escaped from the chance of a snow-wreath for their covering.

Once put upon his mettle, the old man bustled bravely about, providing for our comfort; the carpets were laid, the fire lighted, and fuel in abundance was heaped to supply it; but when the question of "What is to be had to eat?" came to be put, the reply was,—"A blank, my lord!" "Have you any fowls?" "*Yók:*" "eggs?" "*yók:*" "rice?" "*yók:*" "milk?" "*yók:*" "butter?" "*yók.*" "What, neither milk nor butter in a Koordish village!" "*Wullah! yók.*" "But bread then?" Ah! yes, a little bread; and if we desired they would kill us a sheep, and we might have the fat of its tail for butter if we chose. "What! a whole sheep?" said I; "To be sure," said they; "there are plenty to eat it, and then you will have enough for to-morrow's breakfast;" and while Bonham and I were considering about it, the victim in person, which they had got all ready for the anticipated demand, was paraded in by two fellows to be bargained for. There it stood, poor thing! a perfect image of patient meekness, in the hands of its owner, who was feeling its flesh and praising its condition as knowingly as ever a Smithfield grazier. It was rather too cool a thing thus to serve up to you the living creature of which in half-an-hour you were to eat a chop: but urgent circumstances call for strong measures; we ordered the animal away, desiring the Tatar to see if he could agree about its price. About five minutes after this my companion inquired whether they had arranged matters, and whether we were to have the sheep or not. "*Wullah!* it is killed and skinned already!" was the reply: "how will you

have it dressed?" "Oh! kebaubs, to be sure," replied one of our guards, taking up the speech; and although I endeavoured to slip in a hint about a pillaw, it appeared that the wherewithal for that comfortable dish was utterly wanting; so kebaubs were agreed to; and in less than half-an-hour from the moment when the creature, "full of lusty life," had made its appearance before us—before we had discussed a pot of hot coffee I had made to please the rogues, in came two immense rude dishes full of half-scorched gobbets of its flesh, swimming in the melted fat of its own tail! These were placed upon a huge sheet of leather, stained with the relics of a thousand feasts, and to it we all fell—guards, Tatar, Tchlebees, host and all. It was a most atrocious proceeding on the whole; but tender consciences will not do for travellers, and hunger is a famous sauce: the dishes were cleared in a twinkling, and many grunts and "*Alhumdulillahs*" attested the satisfaction produced by the fragments of the poor surprised victim.

Here then behold us, after all our perils by snow and by drift, fairly installed in a little wild Koordish village, the first Europeans probably ever seen there, and very tolerably entertained by a parcel of ruffians, who, could they have met us in the open field in force enough to overpower us, would have cut our throats remorselessly, for the sake of our property;—here we were, hail fellow well met! bandying jokes with all the rogues of the place. I wish some of our "fine" friends could just have taken a peep into a magic mirror, and got a glimpse of our wild-

looking party, seated, as it was, round a fire of cow-dung and dry weeds, in our dungeon-cavern, lighted up with one of my "wax-ends." The old chief of the village was an admirable figure, with breeches that would put the trunk-hose of a dozen ancient Dutchmen to shame; his blue-checked kiurk or jacket, great slovenly turban overhanging his huge features, a nose like that in Slawkenbergius's tale, and patriarchal white beard,—long, verily, shall I remember Ismael of Kamerjôk, for so were the worthy and his village named.

For want of better employment, and in order to promote good-humour, I set the guards to sing, professing a strong desire to hear some Koordish music; and one of them accordingly sung us several airs, with very good voice and emphasis. A solo which followed, on a Koordish flute, was not quite so melodious, but some of the airs had a plaintive and peculiar character that was far from unpleasing. Tired and sleepy, we at length stretched ourselves, just where we sat, upon the numuds, and went quietly to rest, merely taking the precaution to place the guards outside, and nearest the door; for, though I had little confidence in the courage or honesty of these men on the road, as they had been furnished in consequence of the Pashah's order, they might, we thought, at least be trusted to protect both our persons and property, while in the village, from open robbery, though not, as we found to our cost, from petty pilferage. Our last act was an attempt to secure, if we could, a sufficient force of men to help us over the snow on the morrow; but the old man

of the village, when applied to for this purpose, swore, "*Wullah billah!*" that not more than four could he procure, (we had seen twenty stout fellows at least,) and that they would not go under a ducat apiece. After a long and fruitless remonstrance, the Tatar dismissed the meeting in despair; and, notwithstanding the unpromising aspect of affairs, to sleep we all went.

In the morning I was awakened by the customary "*kólk, kólk, Tchelebèe*" of the Tatar, and bustled up in the hope that men and horses were ready to extricate us from our limbo; but, alas! this hope received a damper before I had well got on my legs, for great snow-flakes were coming fast through the only hole in the roof which the apartment possessed to admit of air and light. On going to the door, I found the atmosphere as dark as cloud and mist could make it, with the snow falling thickly. It was impossible not to feel that this was fatal to our hopes of progress, though I would not yet confess it, even to myself; but hopes and fears were soon set at rest by the declaration of our guards, that it had snowed more than six inches deep in the night, and there was no longer question of price with the men of the village, for they now refused to take the hill with us on any terms whatever. To this pleasant information they added, by way of appendix, their own positive refusal either to move themselves or let their horses proceed towards Agajeek, even if we should be mad enough to desire to attempt it.

It needed no ghost, indeed, to tell us, that what we had failed of accomplishing already was not likely

to be achieved under the unfavourable circumstances of a fresh fall of snow and heavy drift, and with dispirited guides and no additional help; so, we had only to adopt the alternative they offered, which was, that instead of remaining to be fairly snowed up in an out-of-the-way village, we should retrace our steps with them to Kizzil-Deezeh, where we should, at least, be better off, and ready to take advantage of the first caravan that might be strong enough to take the road; for to attempt it till thus opened, was, they assured us, out of the question. To the first part of this reasoning we could do nothing but agree; but the latter part was too unpalatable for us yet to stomach. We hoped that at Kizzil-Deezeh, a large village on the highway, men might be procured upon fair terms to help our progress on the morrow: so we loaded our beasts, to take to the road, or rather to the *snow*, once more, for thick enough it was both above and below us.

Last came the reckoning, which afforded us a pretty amusing specimen of Koordish hospitality and conscience. The unhappy *mouton* was charged us a ducat, say nine shillings, not above four times its intrinsic value in the country; and other things were in proportion. To make the best of matters, we ordered the Tatar to secure the remains for our evening meal — remains, indeed! the very rumour of the death of a sheep had mustered every man, woman, and child, in the village; who, resolved on having a feast at our expense, had fallen upon the carcass, and eaten up, "stock and root," every morsel, except what came before us. Well! there

was no help for it, so off we set, and in due time reached Kizzil-Deezeh, which proved, if anything, a more miserable apology for a village than even Kamerjôk.

I wish I could convey to you an idea of this same precious caravan-station, and the den in which we were accommodated. Of the first, nothing was visible except some slight irregularities of surface covered with snow; even the pyramids of dung had disappeared, I fancy, under their load of winter clothing. But the labyrinth of burrows into which the dark entrance of our lodging admitted us would have puzzled a Theseus himself. The old *Reish-Suffeed* led us in by the arms,—a support as well as a guide was indispensable; for though near noon-day, all was dark as pitch, and our feet slipped continually in the fresh cow-dung, or stumbled over thresholds or household articles. Our peregrinations terminated in a little hole scantily lighted by a small orifice in the roof, with a chimney, in which was smothering a fire of wet dung-cakes. It seemed to be the domicile of a favourite horse and a pet ewe; the latter we ousted; the former still retained its berth behind a sort of bar, so contrived as to prevent further intrusion on its part, and mark the boundary of our domain, where it chewed its hay, a very unoffending neighbour.

After my eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the dark and smoky atmosphere, I left our den to peer a little about. In one neighbouring cavern were stabled a number of horses; in another were congregated a collection of most unlovely women,

children, and sheep; from a third there was pouring forth a multitude of cows and year-olds in a stream that nearly upset me in the ocean of their dung. There was not much pleasure in all this, so I returned to our room, where numuds had been spread; but scarcely was I seated, when in rushed a great he-goat with a bound and a "Ba-a-a!" followed by his two wives, probably the rightful occupants of some corner usurped by us, who stopped short when he saw us, and seemed disposed to do battle for his privileges. At length, however, we got fairly established, in the agreeable anticipation of occupying this delectable abode for a day or two, when in came our guards, and let the cat of their intentions out of the bag, by declaring that no consideration would induce them to proceed at all; they were going to be off, they said, to Bayazeed, whither we might accompany them or not as seemed good to us. It was in vain we reminded them of their having received our money, and being bound therefore to perform their contract; —all they would agree to was, that if we chose to return to Bayazeed, and wait till the weather got settled and the road fairly opened, they would then perform their engagements; if not, *khoosh-gueldiniz!* they were off! This was a floorer to us, as unexpected as it was mortifying and perplexing. To part with our guards was to cut the last link that connected us with the Pashah's protection, and giving ourselves up to be pillaged by the thieves and robbers around us, who would not fail to make the most of our necessities; yet to leave the village, and

thus move out of the caravan line, was, on the other hand, like abandoning the chances of getting on, which every day's delay rendered more important. I would fain have bargained for even one of the rascals to remain with us while the Tatar should return with the rest to Bayazeed, in order to talk with the Mootsellim of that place; but not one of them would consent to this arrangement, and the conference broke up with a resolution on the part of us all to return to Bayazeed, agreeing with the head man at Kizzil-Deezeh to apprise us of the first caravan that should pass from either side.

I cannot express to you the indignation and pain which we suffered during this discussion, the result of which was to impose on us, to whom despatch was so vitally important, a course of indefinite and mortifying delay; nor the disgust with which we mounted our horses to return to the last town in Turkey, after having, as we hoped, bid it adieu for good: yet such was the decree of fate; for there was no disputing that it was better to place ourselves and our property formally under the protection of a constituted authority, than to remain like knotless threads, without guards or attendants, at the mercy of thieving Koords, merely to watch for a caravan, of which we should hear in a day's space at furthest; so back we went, and here we are, *Mashallah!*

While passing through the Bazar of Bayazeed, on our return, my friend Bonham chanced to recognize an Armenian, who on a former occasion had been his host, and who, glad of the rencounter and keen

for gain, pressed us to take up our quarters with him during our stay in the place. It fortunately happened that the Mootsellim, being applied to by the Tatar for a lodging, gave us a billet upon this very person; so in a very short time we were installed in a comfortable private upper-room, with good carpets and numuds to sit and sleep on, and enjoyed a somewhat frugal repast of salted trout from Erivan, and a dish of better rice than had for some time fallen to our lot.

I now resolved to go myself to the Mootsellim, and endeavour to engage him to forward us upon our route; but it appeared to be the determination of our guards, who still stuck by us, that we should have no access there, for they threw every possible obstacle in our way; we were as resolute as they, however; and here for the first time my knowledge of Persian stood us in good stead, for discovering that the Chiaoosh who had been appointed to attend us understood that language, I explained to him who we were and what we wanted, and soon enlisted him in our service. So, in the evening, Bonham and I, attended by the Tatar and our host, sallied forth to the Durbar of the Mootsellim, or governor who acts for the Pashah. There was no difficulty, as our guards had endeavoured to make us believe, in obtaining entrance—it was the proper time of salaam. The Mootsellim held his court in a neat little apartment, fitted up with carpets and numuds in the Persian fashion, with a blazing fire at the upper-end, and in an atmosphere which betrayed the free use which had been made of the

chibook. I was seated next a well-dressed but dark-skinned dervish, who, hearing me speak in Persian, addressed me in that language, and became the medium of communication with the Mootsellim. He turned out to be a native of Rampore Barelly, in India, who, like others of his calling, had travelled a good deal, and to whom many places and persons in that country were familiar — among the rest he mentioned to me the names of Mr. Elphinstone and my brother. This was a fortunate occurrence, as it proved the means not only of affording the most favourable explanation of my objects and wants, but of placing myself in a more respectable and imposing point of view, in the eyes of the Turkish functionary, than appearances alone would have warranted, and thus forwarding these objects in a degree which might not otherwise have been effected.

A private audience was now immediately granted, and I took advantage of it to mention the ill-conduct of my guards, with the urgency of my business, and concluded by throwing myself upon the Pashah's protection. In return to my representations, the Mootsellim assured me that every effort in his power should be made to speed me on my journey so soon as the weather should permit; but his account of matters was certainly not encouraging, for not only did he assure me that the road was impassable at present from snow, but that it was infested by robbers of the Jelallee tribe of Koords, who came from the Persian side, and committed great depredations upon travellers within the Turkish borders. Only three days before, he told us, that two per-

sons, servants of some great man, had attempted the Kazlee-geul road, and had not been since heard of; and we learned from another quarter, that seven persons had been robbed and stripped, a very few days previously, by a party just their own strength—indeed two of the party afterwards came to our lodgings and confirmed the tale. There was some talking of another and lower road; but though less blocked up by snow, it was stated to be more beset by robbers, and no encouragement was held out for my going by it. The conference terminated in a general assurance of all possible assistance and protection; but we were strongly exhorted to have patience, if only for a day or two, until the weather should settle, so that there should be some prospect of making the attempt with success, when horses and guides and guards should all be placed at our command.

In fact, delay appeared inevitable. It still snowed, and was likely to snow; and the people having no value themselves for time, cannot enter into the feelings of those who have, and consequently cannot be expected to exert themselves as if they did. There was one Mahomed Aga, too, the great spokesman on the present occasion, (for the Mootsellim himself appeared a poor creature,) who I have no doubt had something to do in the matter, and had, we understood afterwards, been once Mootsellim himself. He was a keen old hand, who was equally resolved and able to make his own out of the necessities of travellers in distress, so there was nothing for it but to submit with the best possible

grace to what seemed unavoidable; and here, after all my exertions, and all my whipping and spurring of Tatars, Soorajees, and jades, are we brought up, storm-staid and penned fast in a vile Koordish town, from whence I endite this delectable epistle. I make the best of it, however, and amuse myself with all that is curious and characteristic among this singular people. One sees traits of manners even in such visits as that to the Mootsellim. A stranger can hardly tell what to make of these people. Our guards, who, not being able to prevent our visit, had accompanied us to the castle, and against whom we had preferred complaints, sat down with us in the Mootsellim's assembly; yet these very persons afterwards were ordered to present us with coffee. They were, I imagine, just hangers-on about the Pashah, ready to catch at any odd job that might fall to be done; and from these, with a good portion of knavery and extortion, they extract a livelihood. They have a horse or two, besides, which they employ occasionally. Thus they are mere adventurers; yet the independent feelings of universal equality that marks the Koordish as well as the Toorkeman tribes, and which displays itself in a contempt of forms and distinctions, permits them to sit down in the highest presence.

These guards of ours gave us this very night a pretty broad specimen of their impudence. It is, it seems, the night of the Bairam, or termination of the Ramazan, or Lent—and a season when presents and compliments are interchanged, as at seasons of festivity with us; well, these very rascals, who had

behaved to us so vilely, came to our lodging to beg us for a Bairam present; you may guess my reply. Farewell, dear ——. I close this now, although when it may be forwarded heaven only knows. I shall scribble a little, however, daily, of what goes on here, as I trust we are not always to remain in this limbo.

LETTER VII.

Saduk Beg. — The Dervish. — An Evening Party. — Koordish Hospitality. — Saduk Beg's gratitude. — State and History of Bayazeed. — The Pashah. — Patients. — Dervishes. — Death of Saduk Beg. — A rapacious Family. — A fresh Start. — Agajeek. — A Winter's Gale. — Delay. — Tumbles. — Kara Eineh. — A severe Stage. — A Caravan in Snow. — A Tendoor. — Primitive Groups. — Reach Khoee. — An old Friend. — Muleteers. — Leave Khoee. — Lak Ooroomia. — Tessouj. — Reach Tabreez.

Bayazeed. February.

DEAR ——,

I COMMENCE, you see, at once; what better occupation can I have in my distress than venting my groans upon paper to you, who, if I were in my own dear land, would have the benefit of them *viva voce?*

This morning early we had a visit from my friend, Noor Oollah, the Indian Dervish. He assures me that the road which we attempted and failed in, by the Kazlee-geul, is, after all, the only practicable one; and that, by means of a sufficient force along with us, and attended by the Pashah's servants as guards, we shall be sure of reaching Kara-Eineh, on the other side of the Persian border; on the other hand, were we to try the Makoo road, we should surely fail, as there are no horses to be had

on any terms; and we should probably get robbed into the bargain. He can have no motive, one would think, to deceive us, and therefore I hope he speaks truth; and not only he, but one of the Pashah's gholaums, Mahomed Aga, who speaks Persian, and came to call on me, declared that the mootsellim had actually sent a man to ascertain the state of the road. This looks well, but "*Timeo Danaos!*"

This dervish prevailed on me to-day to visit a sick gentleman of this place, one Saduk Beg, who, he told me, had been ill for more than nine months —too ill to come out to see me. I was somewhat unwilling to commence a system of medical visits; but so much was said about this person, who is, as they assured me, as conspicuous for his rank as for his worth; and I was so besought, for God's sake, and as a deed of charity, to go and see him, that I at length complied.

I was received by a brother of the Beg, a good-looking young man, who spoke Persian, in a decent room, well carpeted and comfortable, though in a tenement, the exterior of which promised little for what it might contain. In a little while the Beg himself made his appearance, supported by two attendants, and was profuse in his thanks and expressions of gratitude. I found that he was labouring under a chronic derangement of the digestive organs, and the usual consequences of such a state, to a degree that seemed likely soon to terminate his sufferings and his days together; and, like most Orientals, who insist on consulting a Frank, he was in full

expectation of receiving from me some wonderful panacea that would effect an immediate cure. I explained to him the impossibility of this, and recommended to him change of air and scene, with certain medicines, which I promised to send him. The two first I considered to the full as essential as the last; for I found that ever since the Russians had destroyed his country he had not returned to it, but lived for the four last years in a hired Armenian house in Bayazeed, out of which he seldom or never stirs. No wonder the poor man should lose his health and get the blue devils.

Saduk Beg is the head of a noble tribe of Koords, named the Auverdee, consisting of about two thousand families, and before the Russians ravaged his country was master of eighteen fine villages. He has now but eight, and of these few are more than half inhabited. He has likewise experienced a sad reverse in his political position; for whereas, formerly, he was the chief counsellor of his sovereign, the most influential noble of the state, he now finds himself so completely in opposition to the ruling party, although still highly regarded in the country, that even before declining health disabled him, he had given up attending the durbar, and lived retired, as I found him. During my visit, a number of persons, his dependants and relatives I believe, came in to visit him, and wish him an "*Eed-e-moobârik*"—a happy Eede or Bairâm, as we at home wish our friends a happy Christmas, or New-Year. They approached one by one, stooped down and took his hand, or the hem of his garment, and kissed it;

but a few, perhaps, of higher rank, received from him a half embrace.

The dervish busied himself exceedingly in providing for the comfort of the Beg, who, I have no doubt, was a good patron of his. He bustled about the bazars for medicines, assisted in compounding them when got, and carried the doses back to the patient with my directions. The rude condition and poverty of Bayazeed may be imagined from the fact, that in all its bazars I could not procure a tolerable piece of rhubarb, nor a single leaf of senna, though there are few market-towns in the East where both medicines are not common. Curious how the mind clings to any object that awakens domestic associations or recollections of things or scenes once familiar! This dervish, who, in India, probably I should have looked upon with indifference, became almost a friend in a remote Koordish town, where all was strange and next to hostile. He could talk a familiar language, and speak of those people and places that I remembered with affection and interest; it was a tie of common feeling that made me regard him as a kind of brother.

This evening we had an amusing party at our lodgings. A number of people came in as we were going to dinner; no doubt, from motives of curiosity, and formed a wide semicircle round us. A sorry dinner it was, by the by, of most tough grandam fowls, and plain boiled rice. The day before our host had offered us wine; this evening he did not: there were too many witnesses, I suppose. Of visitors, whom we knew, were the Pashah's chiaoosh,

one of our old guards; Mahomed Aga *Farsee* (as he was called from speaking Persian), a Persian muleteer, a right grave seignor; one of the mootsellim's chief servants, &c. a very respectable assembly, you will admit. During dinner all was quietness, decorum, and respect; but after a pipe or two, the chiaoosh, who was a clever fellow and a wag, seized a sitara, or rather a kind of four-stringed guitar, and, after tuning it, began to play a very decent accompaniment to sundry Turkish and a few Persian airs, which he sang with more noise and good will than voice. His *chef d'œuvres* were two Turkish ditties, the subject of which was the capture of Erivan by the Russians, and the discomfiture of Hassan-Khan Sirdar, and the Prince Royal, by the same. They appeared to be bitterly sarcastic, and called forth very noisy mirth and shouts of applause from all the company. Now these Koords hate the Russians keenly; and what then must be their antipathy to the Persians, when they can rejoice over reverses of the latter purchased by successes of the former!

I wish you could have seen the party; there were Bonham and I, seated one on either side the fire, which we took care to keep well fed,—by the light of a single tall tallow-torch, set in the middle of the room, while round it, at a due distance, in a semicircle, sat near a score of strangely-habited and fierce-looking figures, some armed, others not; their beards at one moment "wagging all" with laughter —in the next every ear turned with fixed attention to the strains of the musician, while clouds of smoke hung circling over head from half-a-dozen long chi-

bookes, whose pipe-ends protruded into the middle of the room, and the mouth-pieces of which passed with a noiseless but constant movement from lip to lip; for every tobacco-bag is a common good by prescriptive right; and so long as it retains a shred such does it remain.

At length our musical friend, seized with a humorous fit, jumped up, sitara in hand, and treated us to an imitation of a Persian bâzigeer, or dancing girl, with a thousand extravagant gestures, to which the absurdity of his own figure gave an irresistibly ludicrous effect. He was a little man, with a long punchinello-like nose and chin, and a grotesque countenance of imperturbable gravity under his tall Koordish turban: his figure was all breeches; for his shulwars were tied almost under his armpits, and reached down to his ankles, the only other visible vestment being a short embroidered jacket; and he waddled and kicked about with great agility to the infinite delectation of the company, addressing his attentions, in his assumed character, chiefly to "his gravity" the Persian muleteer, a "*Mushedee*" * of most solemn aspect, whom he seemed resolved to show up.

The poor Mushedee bore it as long as he could; but at last feeling the ridicule insufferable, he appealed in most moving and indignant terms to the company in general, and to me in particular, against the injustice of the attack. I agreed with him that it was a very atrocious proceeding, but that the only remedy I saw for him was to take the sitara himself,

* That is one who has made the pilgrimage to Mushed.

and try to turn the tables on his adversary. The Mushedee shook his head; and his grave perplexity and bearded solemnity had so irresistible an effect on the spectators, that the shouts of applause became quite deafening: all the Koords were delighted. Even our Tatar, whose general good humour seemed to be under a cloud, and who sat smoking as if in calm contempt of the chiaoosh's buffoonery, could stand it no longer; his ice was thawed, and he roared and applauded as heartily as the rest. It was plain, however, that poor Mahomed Aga's spirits had not yet recovered his discomfiture in the Kazlee-geul, and he rather discouraged the continuance of the revel, which at length we also were glad to terminate, in order that we might retire to rest.

We had a specimen of Koordish horse-dealing among the incidents of the day. It was known that we were disposed to purchase a good horse or two, provided any such were to be had, and several were brought in the forenoon to be viewed. Among the rest was a pretty little animal, the property of Mahomed Aga, the ex-mootsellim, which was offered at the price of thirty-five ducats. We sent it back with an intimation that its size was too small, and at all events that we did not consider it worth more than six hundred piastres, or about thirteen ducats. The reply to this communication, was a request that I would accept of him as a present. Now the object of such presents being too well known to me to admit of my being taken by it, I returned my compliments, excusing myself at the same time from accepting the proffered gift, on the plea that I had no adequate return to offer. After many messages

and much negotiation the matter came to this, that Mahomed Aga would not bargain with me; but the horse was mine, and whether I sent six hundred piastres, or sixteen hundred, it would be the same to him! To this bit of flummery was added, by way of appendix, that as Mahomed Aga was about to set out for Erzeroom in the morning, whatever it was our purpose to do, had best be done quickly. I did fear some trick; but it was not our game to disoblige Mahomed Aga, and the horse seemed worth the money. My companion wanted such a beast; so the six hundred piastres, six pounds sterling, was sent and accepted, and the horse remained with us.

12th February. Early this morning, that is to say, about eight o'clock, when I was getting out of my nest, a servant of Saduk Beg came to tell me that his master was just coming to see me. It was a singular hour, we thought, and I was sorry that in his weak condition the good Beg should have taken so much trouble; but there was nothing now for it but to receive him. While waiting for this gentleman, our old guards came in to bargain with us for their horses; and a person from the mootsellim, Mustapha Aga,—the Koords are all Agas,—came to inform us that horses were ready for us, together with an order for men to assist us on the mountain-pass from the village of Kizzel-Deezeh, whither, if we pleased, we might go that night, in order to start fair on the morrow. But on inquiry, it appeared that no one had actually come in to tell us whether the road was yet practicable; no caravan had passed from either side, and the mootsellim's servant con-

fessed that matters remained exactly in the same state as before; so that there was no solid ground for hoping for a better result than the last, if we should start.

While we were discussing these *pros* and *cons*, our friend the Indian dervish made his appearance, and, on hearing how things stood, advised us to have a little patience; for that Saduk Beg, who was our good friend, would make a much better arrangement for us of this affair than we could possibly do for ourselves. Proceedings were accordingly stopped, and after a most friendly interview with the Beg, it was agreed that we should remain here to-day; and that he would himself provide horses, and steady guides and guards, from his own village to the Persian station of Kara-Einah, and convey us there free of either cost or trouble — there 's a Beg for you! This was a munificent return for my prescriptions— but "cast thy bread upon the waters," saith the Scriptures. In fact, although I did not at first understand that the assistance was to be gratuitous, I felt the great advantage of the offer; and expressed myself as thankfully as if I had comprehended its full extent. This quite put out of joint the noses of these gentlemen, who hoped to make a second harvest out of our necessities, and among the rest of Mahomed Aga, the ex-mootsellim, who came, while the Beg was with us, to pay us his parting compliments, and take our commands for the Pashah to Erzeroom. I do believe, that, for all his smiling face, he cursed in his heart of hearts the chance and the man, who had come between him and his

prey—for out of question he would have had the lion's share of the profits. He was full of compliments and proffers of services, however, assuring us, that we should find all at Kizzel-Deezah on the alert in our service through his agency. It was obvious that the Beg's presence had a powerful influence upon him, and from the respect with which this personage was regarded, we were enabled to judge of his rank and consequence in the land: few, indeed, of those who seated themselves in the mootsellim's presence, took that liberty before Saduk Beg; even our Tatar stood before him, while we saw some who came to pay their respects repulsed with considerable coldness.

After our levee, which this morning was really of the most brilliant order, we stepped into our boots and walked forth to view the place, and dissipate a little of our *ennui*—*diltungee*, constriction of the heart, as they expressively call it here,—which disappointment and confinement in such close quarters could not fail to produce. Assuredly, no place could have been hit upon worse calculated for exhilarating the spirits than this same Bayazeed; for except at Muzzeenoon in Persia, and some quarters of the towns of Komaishah and Koom, I never saw so complete a scene of ruins. Scarcely one house in a hundred was inhabited; of those inhabited, few were in repair; and the great magazine of fuel for the remaining people of the place, at this time, is the beams and woodwork of the abandoned dwellings. It is a most dismal, and to Koords and Armenians must be a most exasperating, spectacle; but this is

what they owe to the tender mercies of Russia. Ten thousand Armenians are said to have been carried off from Bayazeed alone, to perish in the forests of Akhiska and the swamps of Mingrelia; and now there were not, I was assured, three hundred in the place. Not contented with this Armenian spoil, a number of Koords were also deported in this arbitrary manner; but of these, more hardy and accustomed to the severities of a nomadic life, the greater portion found means to escape, although many of them also died in misery. To Bayazeed the consequences of this spoliation have been ruinous, though it is but the consummation of a series of misfortunes which have lately fallen in quick succession on this devoted town, and which in all, except this last act, may be taken as the customary closing chapter in the history of most petty states, which owe their rise to the weakness of their neighbours, great or small. I do not know much of the history of Bayazeed; perhaps, if I did, the detail would not interest you greatly. The present reigning family, who are Koords of the Zeelanlee tribe, date their rise from Mahmood Pashah, whom they call Buzoorg, or the Great. He was succeeded by Isaak Pashah, who commenced the handsome castle which is the residence of the present Pashah, and who also was a great chief, and a great tyrant. On his death his brother, Ibrahim, made an effort to set aside his nephew, Mahomed; but the young man's rights were asserted by the father of Saduk Beg, at that time the most powerful noble of the country, who succeeded in placing him on the musnud. Mahomed, however, died after a

few months, and was succeeded by Ibrahim, who revenged himself for the opposition of the Ouverdee chief, by destroying all the property of his family in the town, while Saduk Beg himself, then a youth, was forced to fly for his life; nor did he return till after the death of Ibrahim, which took place some years after. It is now some twenty years past since Ibrahim was taken prisoner by the Turkish governor at Erzeroom, who pillaged his treasury, and carried him off to that city, placing Behlool, the present Pashah, and son of Mahomed, upon the musnud. About four or five years afterwards, Behlool, who is deficient in all the qualities requisite to form a fit ruler of so turbulent a country, was, in his turn, carried off to Erzeroom along with everything the Osmanlees could lay hands upon. Next came the war with Persia, in 1822, when the pillage was completed by Allee Khan, the Persian general, who took up his quarters at Bayazeed, and swept away the miserable leavings of the Turks. The Pashah, and all the chiefs they could catch, including my friend Saduk Beg, were made prisoners on this occasion and carried off to Khoee, where some, if not the whole, of them were detained a year. Still, plundered and trampled on as they were by Turk and Persian, the population of Bayazeed remained, and with it the materials of reviving prosperity. The finishing blow was reserved for Russia, who by utterly depopulating both town and country, and pillaging the little that had been collected since past misfortunes, deprived both of the means of renovation, while they wantonly destroyed what they could

not carry off. It is scarcely possible that the place can be repeopled; it has neither commerce nor facilities for manufactures of any sort, nor any advantage of situation to recommend it. Its former population and prosperity were owing, probably, to the protection which the inhabitants enjoyed in a strong fortress, under bold and successful chiefs: this now being at an end, there is nothing to induce a fresh colony to re-occupy the ruins.

The evidences of this fallen condition stare you in the face at every footstep, as you clamber from ruin to ruin. The miserable bazars of scattered shops were furnished with only the very dregs of the necessaries of life; and the wretched shopkeepers sat among their tumble-down tenements like the withered remnants of an exhausted people. It is small wonder that the Koords of Bayazeed should hate their neighbours one and all; for from all they have suffered,—it might be hard to decide at whose hands most. Whether they were the first aggressors or not has nothing to do with present feeling, whatever it may have with justice of complaint. Perhaps it may be because the injuries they have sustained from Russia are the most recent, as well as because they were inflicted by *kaffers*, unbelievers, that they seem to abhor them most. Most obvious indeed was this smothered hatred, although the people generally, and their chiefs in particular, are too proud to give vent to complaints which can only betray their weakness. I found all the great people I spoke to rather shy upon the subject—it was too painful to bear its being touched

upon; but many of the inferiors, particularly those who could converse in Persian, spoke out, and described with much energy how bitter were the feelings of the Koords, though restrained by a consciousness of their own weakness. Who indeed can look upon the ruins of Bayazeed, and doubt that the hearts of every Koord and Armenian must burn for the insults they have suffered at the hands of Paskevitch and his myrmidons.

I was assured that the same sentiments existed at Erivan, and in the districts newly acquired from Persia; for that the misery created there by tyranny and oppression was little less than that which weakness and misrule had produced in former times under the native government; and that this is no trifle is abundantly notorious. This very day, while our host, Khojah Ohan, was sitting with us, there entered a man in the Nizam uniform, apparently a petty officer, who very unceremoniously demanded a saddle from the Khojah. He was to accompany Mahomed Aga to Erzeroom he said; a horse had been furnished him, but no saddle, and that he, the Khojah, must provide him with. In vain did our poor host protest that he possessed no such article; the officer insisted, not in the tone of one urgently pressing a favour, but that of claiming a right; and after remonstrating till his patience was exhausted, the Khojah at length got into a rage, started up, pulled on his boots and sallied forth, declaring that he would go to the castle and complain to the mootsellim of the exaction. So out went the oppressor and the oppressed together, and how the affair

exactly terminated I know not; but certes not without the payment of smart money by the Khojah.

The whole country, in point of fact, is in a state of disorganization: the Pashah, naturally feeble-minded, has, since the destruction of his resources by the Russian invasion, lost the little power he had: unable to pay his troops or restrain disorder, his discontented chiefs, after committing all manner of irregularities, quitted the pashalic to avoid the consequences of their own excesses, some taking refuge in Persia, some in other parts of the Turkish, and others even fleeing to the Russian territories, leaving Bayazeed so bare of subjects and resources, that the Pashah, we were assured, can now scarcely collect enough of means to defray his private expenses. The best of his districts and villages are the property of Begs or Agas, who hold themselves aloof, if not independent, or belong to his own family, who consume their revenues, so that nothing reaches the Pasha's treasury. He is afraid even to punish such open robbers as may be caught, because they are protected by some of these disorderly chiefs; and the very relatives of those who were put to death for misdemeanours in the late reign, have come forward as injured persons to claim the price of blood at the hands of those who were made the executioners of their sovereign's sentence. Some notion of the imbecility of Behlool Pashah may be had from the fact, that he is unable even to protect his own property in the immediate vicinity of the fortress. The Jelallee and other Persian Eeliauts, come down, they say, in spring, to the plains below Bayazeed,

with their families and cattle, and not only eat up the pastures of the neighbouring inhabitants, but carry off with impunity everything they can lay hands upon, even to the mules, horses, and camels of the Pashah, within sight of the windows of his palace.

This afternoon two more patients were brought to me; one, an elderly man, who had become totally blind of one eye from cataract, hastened in its effects by the rough treatment of an ignorant Persian quack, while the other was fast following its neighbour. He expected immediate cure: I was compelled to disappoint him by declaring my inability to render him any assistance—it was the act of God, I said, with which I could not interfere. The poor fellow, far more reasonable than most men with whom I have had to do in similar cases, on hearing this, bowed his head with reverence, and touching first the ground and then his forehead with his right hand, exclaimed, "The *hakeem* says right; it *is* the work of God, and I submit to his will. God is great!" and so saying, without more ado he rose, and, taking his staff and the arm of a friend who had brought him to the house, went his way with a resignation which might have edified a Christian prelate.

The other patient was a woman, whose husband, the merry chiaoosh, attempted with much earnestness to explain some inexplicable malady with which she was, he averred, afflicted. These good people were less reasonable than the old blind Koord, and, right or wrong, would have me prescribe. So I made up a parcel of pills, coloured and scented with

some innocent drug, in hopes of acting on the lady's imagination, and sure, at all events, of doing no harm; an expedient which I have found often wonderfully efficacious, and which now sent the poor creature away contented, for the time at least.

13th February. Our fame spreads; we had a visit this morning from no less than two other dervishes, one of them about the wildest-looking creature I ever saw, with a tattered green robe, and long black locks flowing in the most dishevelled manner from under his *tajè* or dervish's cap, and eyes that might have set the Thames or the Euphrates on fire. He brought me a sick child to prescribe for—plenty of patients everywhere, alas!—and to my surprise it turned out to be his own. "What," said I, "a dervish and married?"—"Yes," he said; "what am I to do?" In fact, he confessed that he had *two* wives, no less; and it seems the fashion at Bayazeed for dervishes to marry; for the other, a stupid-looking fellow, with nothing, I dare be bound, of the dervish but the cap and mantle, informed me that he too had his better half—it must be a thriving trade: but whatever might be the attractions of these saints for the fair sex, they had little to us; for two more stupid fellows I never had the misfortune to meet.

Every evening we have our *soiree*. Our coffee and tobacco are good, and attract plenty of people; and this amuses us in our confinement, for the weather is so cold and unsettled that little going abroad satisfies us. I tried to make a sketch of the castle to-day, but was forced to give up the attempt, after

nearly losing my fingers by the frost. Our quarters are not uncomfortable, but our host is a selfish fellow, and a miserable purveyor. He gives us wretched food, and quarrels with our Tatar because he will not scatter our money to right and left. "Certainly," says he, "these *Begzadehs*" (sons of lords, noblemen,) "have plenty of money; why don't you make them give it out more freely?" He hopes, no doubt, to make a handsome thing of us, and it appears likely that he will have time enough to do it in. Last night we heard that Mahomed Aga was stopped by snow at Kizzil Deezeh on his way to Erzeroom, the road to Diadeen being impracticable; and Saduk Beg, who had sent for our Tatar, told him that the horses and men had come from his villages and were at our service, but that to move was impossible—they had almost been lost by the way, and one man had lost his foot by the frost. We must therefore, he said, make up our minds to remain until a caravan, said to be at Agajeek, should force its way and open the road: in the mean time, if we were weary of our lodging, his house was at our service, with all that it contained. I was happy to hear that he had experienced relief from the medicines which I had given him.

14th February.—We were roused this morning, by the intelligence that a caravan was expected to arrive at Kizzil-Deezeh, to-day, and I went immediately to the Beg to learn the truth. He very kindly sent at once for the persons who had brought the information, and from them we learned that certain men had made their way from Agajeek, by

the short road, keeping to the tops of the hills: and it was arranged that, if nothing came in the way, we should attempt the same route to-morrow. In the evening we went and took leave of this good and simple-minded man, who, whatever may be said of his countrymen, or the inhabitants of Bayazeed, in general, proved himself to us a kind and disinterested friend, and evinced a gratitude for our little attentions which the most important services would not have awakened in others with whom I have had to deal. All he asked in return for his own share of the good work of forwarding us upon our way, was to have his name mentioned suitably to the British Resident in Persia, whom he further requested to send any of his countrymen that might be travelling this way at once to his house, where they should find all sorts of attention and assistance.

Unhappily he lived not either to receive the thanks of Sir John Campbell for his attentions to us, nor the testimonies of our own sense of his kindness, which I had forwarded from Tabreez. The benefit he had received from the medicines I gave him, induced him to urge me strongly to leave a supply of the same sort with him for future use. It was in vain that I represented the danger of their being applied by persons having no sufficient knowledge of their strength or proper effects, or that I urged his going to Tabreez to put himself under the care of a regular physician. Move from Bayazeed he would not, and have the medicines he would —so I made them up for him in such shapes and doses as I thought least liable to mistake, or to do

evil instead of good; and explained, not only to him, but to the Indian dervish who remained with the Beg, both their uses and the mode of using them: but whether the disease of itself was fatal in its tendency, or whether its effects were increased by an injudicious use of the remedies I left with him, I cannot say—very possibly the latter, for Orientals often imagine that if one dose does good, ten must just produce ten times the benefit, and sometimes take a good quantity of some drug by which they have once been relieved, when they can get it, by way of preventive. Be that as it may, Saduk Beg, as I afterwards learned, lived but a short time after we left Bayazeed; and when the presents sent him by Sir John Campbell and ourselves reached that place, the good man had gone, as we may hope, to receive his reward in that better world, where sickness and death cannot enter.*

15th February.—Anxiously did we await the dawn of the morning, which we trusted was to relieve us from our irksome thraldom. The Tatar, not less eager than ourselves, was at his arrangements long before day-break: and scarcely had the first grey light appeared over the lofty mountains that overhang the town, than I was myself on foot, to see—the nearest of the hills overspread with clouds, and a small snow fast falling!—This was disheartening, but we were resolved to make the attempt, and accordingly began to load as soon as

* It is hardly worth while observing that this paragraph is an anachronism, having been added to the original letter to preserve the continuity of narrative.

the horses came; and I need scarcely attempt to describe to you the feverish uneasiness with which I watched on one side, the weather, on the other the progress of our own operations: I felt as if some spell was overhanging us that would infallibly operate to prevent our departure after all, unless by some special activity we could elude its influence. There was a ceremony of leave-taking also to be gone through before getting clear of our prison; and of a less pleasant nature than our parting from the warm-hearted Beg—it was that with our Armenian host. This fellow from the first had expressed his resolution to make the Begzadehs part with their money, and they were just as determined to concede no more than what was just and fair to such a knave. So when I tendered to him what I knew to be ample remuneration for his somewhat scanty fare and empty room, he affected to be wonderfully shocked. I called upon him for his account, which he either could not or would not produce; so I added two small gold pieces, and telling him that he was twice over-paid, was making my way to the door, when in rushed the women bringing forth his son, a little boy who had frequently favoured us with his company, and for whom, as well as for themselves, they clamorously insisted on obtaining *buksheesh*. This was more than I chose to stand; so gathering up my things, I walked off to the horses. Beside these stood a poor fellow of a servant, who had done all our rough work, and never asked us for anything; so to show his master that I was ready to pay for civility and

good treatment when it appeared, I gave him a golden ducat as I took my horse from his hand. Would you believe it, no sooner did the greedy khojah observe this, than before my very face he ran and took it from the poor fellow, and then a whole posse of servants and others—many whose faces I had never till that moment seen, set open-mouthed upon me with the same song of "*Buksheesh, Buksheesh!*"

With difficulty I escaped from them, and was shaking the snow instead of the dust from my feet at all, but Saduk Beg, in Bayazeed, as we filed out from the ruined gateway, when the Tatar missed Mr. Bonham's small saddle-bags, which were used to carry our tea and coffee apparatus, and sundry other conveniences. Both Mr. Bonham and the Tatar had seen them on one of the loads; but they had disappeared between our lodgings and the gate. In vain was the hue-and-cry raised, and two men sent back to recover the lost goods; no tidings of them were to be had, probably, for the best of good reasons, that our guards themselves were the thieves. The only consequence of our vain search was the loss of a precious half-hour of daylight, after which we proceeded upon our journey. This was not the only trick played us by the Beg's honest attendants. He had declared to us that five horses had been provided for us, and five mounted guards; but only three of the former were produced, so that we had to hire two more nags ourselves upon the best terms we could. I am confident this was an abuse on the part of these varlets, and of which the Beg knew

nothing; and we could not, of course, take any notice of it to him.

At length the town was cleared, and we held our way up a high hill behind it, along a track made by some bullocks and men—the same who had come in the day before. We had some very severe tugs up steep ascents, covered deeply with snow, but at length made our way to a point where the track joined that of the caravan-road; a good way, as I was sorry to observe, on the wrong side of the Kazleegeul. Scarcely had we proceeded a mile, however, when the track became obliterated by drift, and the horses began to flounder as usual in the snow. This same villanous Kazleegeul is in fact a sort of funnel, through which the winds seldom or never cease to blow. The track of the previous day was not only quite obliterated, but the snow that covered it had been frozen so stiff and hard by the night's frost, that there was no making way through it, and we had to clamber over heights, and to keep the weather side of the hills, where the snow had been blown away; ever and anon having a fearful struggle through some hollow or water-course that divided them. It was hard and discouraging work, but our guards were stouter-hearted fellows, and more willing than our former ones; and after enduring eight hours' hard wind and drift, during which we made out not more than twenty miles of real distance, we had the inexpressible satisfaction of descending the formidable hill of Agajeek, and reaching the most miserable village of Ecclesia, at the foot of the pass.

Here we found our cattle so much exhausted, and the cold so intense, that it would have been madness to attempt another long stage with the same men and horses, and in the face of a rising wind, so that we came-to for the night in the house of Eussuff Khan *Eironlee* (I think), to whom the village belongs: it was the mercy of Providence that we did so, as you will see; had we gone on, not one of us would have seen the morning alive. There are in this neighbourhood a cluster of little groups of hovels, which form the Agajeek *Balook*, or district. In each of these lives some miserable petty Khan, who ekes out a wretched subsistence by plundering such passengers and fleecing such luckless travellers as chance sends to his den. One of these, Jaffer Khan, was so notorious as a rogue, that we avoided his village, and went in preference to this one, where it was our intention to put up with one of the peasants for the night. We had actually made our arrangements with one of these, and even had unloaded our beasts, when Eussuff Khan, hearing of our arrival, and no doubt resolved that so fine a prey should not escape him, came by way of compliment to see us, and then insisted on our removing to his house. I knew the consequence; worse fare, less convenience, and more to pay for it; but "it is ill crossing the Laird in his own bounds;" "beard-ing the Douglass in his hall." He might have prevented our procuring a single grain of corn, or a bit of bread; so "up we rose and donn'd our clothes," and accompanied the Khan to his own dwelling.

Both this and the village were as wretched as

anything we had yet seen. The huts were invisible among the snow until you had reached their entrance, and the cavern into which we were shown was nothing more than the common stable, in which we lay scarcely separated from the stock of horses and cows. This is in fact, with slight shades of difference in point of convenience, the custom of the people all over this part of Koordistan. "On one side," say they, "the *Mâl*," that is, the cattle — property in beasts; "on the other, the *Zen-o-Batchaha*," the wife and children—"such is the fashion with us Koords." A small *outagh*, or apartment, in the centre, contents the master, and of course must satisfy the guests.

We had now crossed the frontier of Turkey and Persia, and we experienced a corresponding change in the costume of the people. Persian black caps and kabbas surrounded us; grievously ragged indeed they were; but though the young fellows of the village were of an appearance so blackguard and shabby, that they would have disgraced the family of the meanest muleteer in Persia, they all wore the long side-locks behind the ears, common to would-be beaux in that country, and affected the swagger of the Persian dandy. Our host himself is a big butcher-like fellow, of most truculent aspect, from whom, if in his power, I should expect no mercy—and I dare say he will fleece us to the best of his abilities.

Before quitting the neighbourhood of Bayazeed, I would just mention, that the geological structure of this quarter appears to be well worth examining;

covered as the whole surface was with snow, there was nothing to be made out regarding its general character from the accidental peeps we might get at the face of a rock. Limestone in various forms, and porous basalt, appeared most frequently; with sandstone occasionally, and much conglomerate; but all greatly confused, as might be expected in a volcanic country, near the great crater. I hope the subject may soon engage the attention of some scientific hand.

16th February.—We are doomed to taste of the inconveniences and delays of winter in all their various shapes. I do not know whether I may convey to you a sense of this variety, but we have it in perfection, although suffering and loss of time be the invariable result; storm and frost, and cold, and sleet, and snow, and wind, all retard and vex the traveller. The last came in a new and fierce shape to-day. Yester-night, as we reached the village, the breeze, which all day had been pretty strong, began to blow with violence. It was with no very pleasant feelings that I heard it roaring in the chimney during the night; and, on looking out in the morning, although the sky was clear, the snow was flying so fast from the hills, and the wind was so bitter, that any attempt to move before daybreak became impossible; so we waited. But by morning the wind had increased to a hurricane, and the cold was so insupportable that all the people declared it impossible to face it. "Should a horse fall, or stick in the snow, or should a load go wrong, how is it to be put to rights? There it must remain, for there is

not a man of us could put a hand out to help it; it would be withered in a moment." This was too obvious to be disputed; and we, therefore, agreed to wait some hours more, to see if this dry tempest would abate. It was sufficiently provoking to be thus detained with a clear sky and a bright sun over head; but if proof had been required of the danger of moving, it was furnished by an accident that had nearly deprived one of the people of a hand. He had taken his horse along with the rest to water at a spring, when accidentally, dropping one of his gloves, the wind carried it away some paces, and before he could recover it, his hand was frozen so stiff, that it was with the greatest difficulty his companions, by violent friction, saved it from mortification.

For some hours the storm raged with intense fury; the air was filled so thick with sparkling snow-drift that nothing was visible at ten yards' distance; and even when the wind did somewhat abate, you could see the dry snow flying in dense clouds from every ridge of hill, and pouring along the ground like a stream. Once or twice, when there seemed likely to be a lull, I wished to have tried it; but the Tatar himself was too much alarmed, too well acquainted with the risk, to venture: for, as the nearest village was six hours of space distant, which it would require ten or twelve to traverse, we should have been pretty sure of a night's lodging in the snow; the consequences of which, in such weather, could not be doubtful. So, with a brilliant sun, and a white intensity of light, that made the eyes ache

again, here are we forced to stay at least another day in our dark and dreary cell, instead of speeding on to the completion of our task :—but patience ! Ah ! little do you good folks at home, that sit lounging over a book of travels after dinner, with a foot on either hob, and a glass of generous wine on the polished mahogany beside you,—little do you comprehend the manifold pains and vexations which those who write them often undergo. Bitter, bitter cold it is now as I write this, in spite of the lumps of cow-dung fuel that smoke and stink and hiss in the fire-place. The sharp drift is pouring in at every corner. My companion and the Tatar are seeking relief from their annoyances in sleep, and snoring away in very good harmony. I dare not sleep also, for I know that if we all shut our eyes at once, pilferage and pillage would instantly commence.

A weary, weary day has passed, and there are little hopes of better weather; for the sky looked black to windward, as the sun went down, and the wind continued loud and unabated. God help us, for we are sorely beset; yet still let us be thankful; for though vexed by delay, we have a solid roof over our head; and that, in such weather, is no small blessing.

17th February.—Thank Heaven ! the wind did abate through the night, and towards morning, though a sprinkling of snow did fall, the air was milder, and we began to load at daylight; they are now at work; God send us a happy escape from this inclement region ! What a spot to spend a winter

in! a constant funnel for the winds; the very abode of frost; the Simurghs' dwelling-place in the icy Deserts of Kâf was not more desolate. "We have always six months of snow and winter here," said the Khan, when I asked him about the climate; "and, when God pleases, seven; sometimes it clears up at the *no-roz* (vernal equinox), and then we have spring; but oftener the ground is covered with snow for a month longer."

The separation of these people from the rest of the world does not open their hearts to the charities of life or the duties of hospitality. Our fare was poor enough; perhaps, they had nothing better to give; and to judge by the charges made, they must have estimated their entertainment or our purses at a very high rate.

Our truculent-looking host made a demand not much above four times the value of what he had furnished to his "highly-valued and cherished guests;" and we left the dreary place and its inhospitable people about seven in the morning, right thankful to be done with both. Our way lay along an uneven plain to a low hill, which we crossed; after which, a long weary defile brought us to the plain of Kara-Eineh, on which are scattered some five or six villages, built more in the Persian than the Koordish fashion. They are surrounded by a few willows and Lombardy poplars, and the trouble which we had in crossing several water-courses, with the long lines of those which might be traced across the plain, indicated a considerable extent of cultivation, though the deep snow which lay on the

surface prevented it from being otherwise remarked. We had a desperate road, and a full proportion of our usual flounderings, the old track being totally effaced by the tempest of yesterday; but the wind fortunately was in our backs, so that we did not feel it so bitterly. Nevertheless, both men and horses were so done up with cold, and ten hours of unremitting exertion, that when we reached Kara Eineh there was very little idea entertained of proceeding further that night. I had three severe tumbles this day: in one case the horse slipped on the verge of a precipice, forty or fifty feet high, and could not recover himself; but he most providentially fell in such a way that I could scramble off into a snow wreath, where I stuck, breaking the stirrup-leather, which otherwise would have dragged me down and finished me. The two others were quite severe enough to send me to my stage with a sad stiff back, but with a thankful heart.

Kara Eineh, I mean the halting village, is a wretched place, which I understood had been lately ruined by an earthquake; but we got a decent chamber to lodge in, and some pillaw of tolerable quality to refresh us. We were still doubled up with our Koordish guards, however, every one of whom have got coughs and colds, and who, consequently, kept up such a chorus of barking, in different keys, that it was impossible to sleep all night. Thank Heaven, this is the last we are to have of them.

18th February. With this the first *chupper khaneh*, or post station, in the Persian territories,

began our rows for horses. Strange, how fond these people are of mystifying simple matters, of making difficulties which they know must be got over, without any apparent prospect of ultimate gain to themselves. Last night the battle began, by a denial that they had any horses at all,—then *three*, they allowed, might be had; another hour's contention produced *five;* but as for a mounted guide, or Soorajee, such a thing was quite out of the question; *three* men on foot they would give, but not another horseman or another horse. This morning, when we imagined all was right, we discovered that the whole campaign had to be gone over again; nor was it until serious threats of complaints to the "Ameer Zadeh" (Jehangeer Meerza, a son of the late prince royal, who was said to be at Khoee,) were backed by a display of firmauns and passports, that they listened to reason and produced the horses. It was eight o'clock of the morning before they arrived, and the hire demanded was most extravagant; but as they were to carry us on all the way to Khoee, two ordinary stages, and we should thus avoid another battle at the intervening post-house, I paid it gladly, as well as the no less exorbitant charge for entertainment.

Next came the settlement with our Koordish guards. Our friend, the Beg, as they told us themselves, had strictly forbidden them to accept of a para from us. Nor would they, until I assured them that I had not and should not mention a word of the matter, in the letter which I had promised to write the Beg announcing our safe arrival. But no sooner

was the ice broken than the torrent of cupidity flowed on in full force—instead of thankfully accepting the very handsome present that was offered, they demanded *two* days' expenses for returning. This, knowing, as I did, that now the road was open they might, and probably would, reach home in one day, and that, even if they did stop by the way, their entertainment would cost them nothing, I refused with some indignation. The repulse was, probably, anticipated; at all events, it produced no diminution in their expressions of thanks for what they had received, and away they went, wishing us all manner of prosperity. Our Tatar watched them with a hawk's eye till they were fairly on horseback, when he drew a long breath, and shaking his head with a most serious air, uttered a deep Alhumdulillah!—"Thieves and robbers!" said he:—"all thieves and robbers!—every mother's son of these sons of dogs in the country." And he had cause, indeed, for his evil report of them; for we had more than one proof of their professional proficiency, in the disappearance of sundry trifles of our horse gear. On the previous morning I had missed a saddle-strap myself, which, on a row being made about it by the Tatar, one of these very guards took quietly from round his own waist, and gave to him. I saw the rascal do it. You will not wonder that we were all relieved when we saw them and their horses disappear.

If variety could charm away the sting from danger and difficulty, we have it in perfection. We started this morning with a good fair track through the snow, and two guides on foot, besides one on horse-

back; and so long as the plain extended, got on with little trouble. But the usual road passes through a defile in a deep valley, and this being choked up with Heaven knows what depth of snow, the caravan, whose track we followed, had found it necessary to diverge, and, as we had seen on other occasions, to take to the weather-side of the hills above, which had been laid bare of all but the old tough snow by the action of the wind. There is no describing the toil of following so devious a course, which often lengthens out one stage to the extent of two, — besides involving a succession of the most abrupt ascents and descents that can possibly be imagined. In several places the side, or top of a hill, was blown quite clear of snow, and for a few yards we actually got our feet upon the dear brown soil, a gratification we had not enjoyed for many weeks: but in revenge for this, we had to cross ravines wherein horse and man went down headlong, and the old story of digging cattle and tugging luggage out of the snow had to be recommenced. At length we made a fair bold start up the face of one of the highest mountains of the very lofty range we were traversing. It was so desperately steep, that in many places the horses could not manage it while mounted, and we had to dismount and pant it up on foot, which, " accoutred as we were," was no joke, I assure you.

The summit attained, we cast our eyes over—I will not say *enjoyed*, according to the customary phrase—one of the most withering and hopeless-looking prospects of endless mountains of snow that

ever greeted the inflamed optics of miserable travellers; it seemed as if, in truth, the morning sun coming forth could "wake no eye to life in that wild solitude:" and on these altitudes we continued, plunging down one side of a peak, to mount up another, thus making our way along the crest of the ridge for several hours, with a continuation of effort quite exhausting, until our alpine *traject* terminated in one of the steepest and longest descents I ever made. I am certain we came sheer down an uninterrupted mountain-side of full three thousand feet in height, upon a little hollow, rather than a valley, of unbroken snow, in which lay a village like a black-winged bat sleeping in a nest of eider-down. It was one of the severest things I ever had to do. There was no riding—my saddle came twice over the horse's neck in the attempt, and then I gave it up. It was just one long slipping and scrambling match the whole way down; and I got half-a-dozen severe tumbles to help my poor wrenched back, by the heels of my clumsy boots sliding from under me on the old frozen snow.

We stopped awhile to put ourselves to rights and take breath, at the bottom; and often as I have had occasion to admire the courage of Persian muleteers, I never did so more than at this moment, when, still panting with the exertion of merely *descending*, I looked back, and measuring the height from which we had *stoopcd*, reflected what the first ascent must have been. The caravan which opened this track had come from Khoee, and when they reached this little valley, and observed the state of the snow,

knowing that the defile must be impassable, had taken the bold resolution of breasting up this precipitous acclivity, which even when free from snow would be considered as a desperate attempt. What, then, must the performance of it have been, when the embarrassed animals had to flounder upwards shoulder-deep in tough snow? — when not a moment could pass without loads falling and going wrong; horses and mules tumbling into holes, sinking, giving up, and all the other exciting occurrences incident to such a struggle against difficulties that are often insurmountable even in the plain?—Verily, these rough hardy muleteers merit a crown of honour for their perseverance, and a place for indefatigable courage beside the bold Soorajees of Turkey.

Perhaps, there cannot be a more interesting and exciting spectacle than the progress of a large caravan of mules and yaboos, conducted through the unbroken snow of a stage that has been shut up by drift, or a heavy fall, by these Persian muleteers; and the behaviour of their animals is as gallant, as striking, as their own. A large and powerful unloaded mule is generally chosen to lead on such occasions; and the animal, caparisoned in handsome harness, with bells and fringes, seems conscious of the trust that is reposed in, and the exertions that are expected from him. Far from being dismayed at the laborious exertions that await him, he is ready to fight for the post of honour, and kicks and bites at any of the rest that attempt to pass him, or to share his toils: with a sagacity that seems miracu-

lous, he smells out, as it were, the obliterated track, or searches for a fresh one in the most promising ground. Through the deep but even snow he plunges with unfaltering perseverance, listening occasionally to the shouts or directions of his master, until, quite done up, he is withdrawn to be replaced by a fresh leader. Does a wreath occur, he smells about for awhile, to discover the soundest and shallowest part,—then boldly dashes at it with his full force, and never halts until he flounders through,—or gets so deeply entangled as to require help to effect his extrication. If the snow is very deep there must be many such leaders put forward in front, for the track of one is not sufficient to open up a passage for the loaded beasts; and truly it is a fine thing to see these bold, sagacious brutes performing the duty which they know falls to their share. The loaded animals follow with more caution, but their sagacity is scarcely less admirable. If they fall, or stick, there is a momentary flounder, and a strong effort to get free; but if this fails, they know, as well as if they were endowed with reason, that they are powerless without the aid of men, so they lie quite composed in the snow till that aid comes; and then, to be sure, the practised manner in which they assist these efforts is wonderful. Then for the men,—to see these hardy fellows, in their heavy felt coats or sheepskins, plunging after their beasts, now dashing forward to help the leaders through a bad step,—in another moment loosing the load of a fallen mule, covered with snow; often forced to carry the packages themselves for a considerable way, their mules

now and then rolling head over heels down the hill-side, and landing in the ravine below—themselves working on breast deep a-head, with their long staves to sound the depth of suspicious places. Then the shouting, and the whinnying, and the braying, and the ringing of bells, and the shrieks or cries of the passengers, who may be pent up in kajawahs or baskets on either side a mule, form altogether a scene of interest and excitement which it is not easy to forget.

The village which we had reached by this adventurous path, was after all but three hours, or twelve miles of real distance from Kara Eineh, although good eight of time had been consumed in our alpine wrestlings, and the guides were so tired that they made a desperate stand for halting here all night. But the sun being still two hours high, we refused to listen to their remonstrances, and finding small attention paid to our orders, we began to flog on the load-horses, threatening to serve the guides in the same manner if they did not choose to obey. This produced the desired effect, and after the loss of a precious half-hour we succeeded in turning our backs on the village, still accompanied by our guards, who did not dare to lose sight of their cattle. It was not altogether without some misgivings that we took this step, for we had been informed that there was no village nearer than four hours' distance a-head: the three last had occupied *eight*, and if the road should prove no better, there was little room to hope that we should make out the remaining four, with tired horses, in less time.

In effect, the first part of the road appeared to bear out the testimony of the guards which we had doubted, and who assured us that the road was worse than any we had yet seen; for we had some sad floundering work in the bottom of the valley, and one of them having sunk up to the knee in a springhead, swore he was ruined—that he should lose the limb from the cold, and could therefore go no further. Assuring him, however, that in exercise lay his only safety, we resolutely persevered; and as boldness is sometimes, like virtue, its own reward, we soon after most fortunately fell into the track of a flock of sheep, that had beaten the snow as hard as a stone, and then we made capital play. A little after dark we met with a party of men who had come from the next village, which they assured us was not more than a mile a-head: this was not true; but it gave us spirits, and in spite of some sad hard work in beating on our weary beasts, after we lost the sheep track, we reached Skeffleck, a miserable village inhabited by Persians—who lived Coordish fashion—about ten o'clock at night. The cold during this whole day was intense beyond description. You may fancy what it was when I tell you, that we found at one place on the road side a hill partridge, and at another a vulture, both frozen to death.

It was with difficulty that we roused the sleeping inmates of the hovel to which we were led by our guide: a most wretched abode it proved; cattle, horses, and sheep, mixed up with men, women, and children, all huddled together under what coverings they could muster, and without even the usual

separation between the human and brute beasts. It was cold enough, too, to render juxtaposition very expedient, for there was no fire-place nor fire except in what is called a *tendoor*, that is, a hole dug in the floor, into which a huge earthen jar is sunk, and in which the bread of the family is baked. The mode of baking is this—a quantity of fuel, dry weeds, bushes, wood, or cow-dung, is thrown into this subterraneous receptacle, and there burned till the place is nearly red-hot. The women then taking large lumps of dough, previously worked up to the proper consistency, stick it against the smooth inside of the tendoor, dexterously plastering it over with a rapid sweep of the arm, so that it becomes a thin bannock, which is very soon sufficiently baked, and, when taken out, is the *flap* of bread which you have seen mentioned by Persian travellers, and in Morier's "Hajèe Baba."

Round this tendoor was clustered the wild-looking and scarcely wakened medley, some entirely naked, others very little better, each now and then thrusting a leg into this primitive oven, as he could reach it, in order to revive the chilled member. I must say that they very civilly and hospitably tumbled out of the way to make room, as we poor lumps of icicles and frozen snow came shivering in, scarce able to drag one leg after another, from one of the hardest of many a hard day's work. Our fare, too, was better than appearances gave reason to expect; for no less than fifteen good eggs were produced from the "Gude wife's" store, and most ingeniously tossed in a pan within the womb of the gaping

tendoor; and an excellent dish of *âb-e-ghoosht*, *alias* soup with the meat in it, made its appearance from some other crypt, to be warmed in the same cooking shop among the legs of the company, our own included, which were thrust in in turn to be unbenumbed.

After supper, we had time to look round upon the motley group that occupied the portion of the huge black cavern where we sat. Among them were some serbâz, or Persian soldiers, returned to their homes after service, two of whom, singular enough, recollected me at Tabreez, twelve years ago; and there were three or four most villanous-looking Koords, who eyed us askance, and seemed to be all the time considering whether we were worth robbing, and how far it was probable we might be easily robbed.

In conversing with these serbâz about their late campaigns, it was pleasant to observe the affectionate and loyal strain in which they spoke of the late Prince Royal, although in some respects, Heaven knows, their obligations to him were small. One of them related to me a rather touching anecdote of a very young member of that prince's family: "I was sentinel," said he, "one bitter winter's night at his highness's quarters, before the harem, where there were many of the women and children, when a little girl, his royal highness's daughter, put her head out between the *serperdahs*, (canvass walls), and said to me, '*Serbáz*, are you not cold?' 'Very cold,' said I. 'And are you not hungry too?' asked the little princess. 'Very hungry, your

highness,' said I; 'but I am so cold that *be-ser-e mubârik-e-shumah!* (by your august head!) I could not even hold a bit of bread, nor eat it, if I had it.' '*Subr-koon*, have patience, wait,' said the little girl; and disappearing from the serperdahs, she ran to the nazir, or steward, and would not let him have rest till she got victuals of all sorts, and a good *jubbeh*, or a great coat, which she made them give me, with a golden ducat, saying, 'Here, Serbâz; here is a ducat for you, and a great coat to keep you from the cold.' *Wullah billah!*" added the man; "it went to my very heart, and I never can forget it."

In due time we all, one after another, stretched ourselves to sleep, taking the precaution to place our baggage between us and the wall; but it was with little hopes of much rest, for we lay on the cold ground, and the air of the place, though stifling and bad, was cold; but it was still better than a snow-wreath, and we thanked the Almighty with sincere fervour for having spared us such a night's lodging, and given us even so humble a shelter.

19th February. — Rose by dawn after a miserable night — a more than ordinary allowance of our usual nightly tormentors; and the cold of our half-thawed, half-frozen clothes, upon the damp clay floor, was enough to keep us from sleep; but to add to our nightly comforts there was a whole brood of cocks, apparently of all ages, certainly of all voices, some with colds and sore throats too, but all equally eager to display their vocal accomplishments, which, perched just above us, kept

up from mid-night till day-break an unremitting crow, — no wonder we had a good dish of eggs to supper. Each house in the neighbourhood, too, seemed equally well provided in the poultry line, and the challenge flew from roost to roost, so that scarcely had they ceased in one quarter before a full chorus struck up in another. Neither my companion nor myself could sleep a wink, which was the more provoking as all around us were snoring.

It was a lovely morning, though cold, cold as ever. As we were getting ready, the women came clustering around us, fierce-looking, dishevelled creatures, with long hair hanging round their faces. Two of them only were young, I can hardly say pretty, and each held a bundle of rags on her arm, out of which peeped the little features of a youngling, not many weeks old. The elder brats ran about, half or wholly naked, among our feet, like the dogs and the fowls. It was a fantastic, rather than an engaging scene; one wondered how the little creatures, with their slender coverings, could endure the severity of cold, which pinched us under all our garments. The women wore upon their head a black cap, or handkerchief, bound round with another spotted white and blue; and over all was tied a white cloth, going under the chin and covering that and the mouth. The light of morning, indeed, showed us all the secrets of our night's abode. It differed little, except in superior rudeness, from many that we had seen and I have described: a large cavern, divided into many compartments; that which we occupied was, I think, forty feet long at the

least, twenty-five broad, and about ten high; and the flat roof was supported by substantial beams of fir-tree wood. One small aperture, a foot square, was all that gave light and air to this apartment, and at night it was closed with a wisp of straw. It was the most primitive and savage domicile, I think, we had yet seen.

We mounted at seven, with a splendid sun shining in a clear cold sky, and held down the course of the stream, now increased to a little river, which joins the Arras at Oslandooz; till, turning up a small valley, we came upon the nice village of Zoharab, the regular Chupper station. Here there were no horses, however, which proved the wisdom of the step we had taken, of securing our own beasts all the way to Khoee. Here, too, we found a Tatar going to Constantinople, by whom I sent a few lines written on a leaf of my pocket-book, to tell of our safety so far. But we missed the regular English Tatar, in consequence of his having put up at another village; a disappointment which only people in a situation like ours, gaping for news and anxious to communicate it, can appreciate.

From Zoharab we ascended gradually to a great height, first along an inclined plane, and then up a mountain to a gorge, along which we descended tortuously, but rapidly, upon the plain of Khoee. The whole road from Erzeroom to Khoee, indeed, to Tabreez, runs through a succession of plains and defiles, or over ranges of lofty mountains; but all the country on the right hand, that is, the S.S.W., is high and cold. The snow lies in most places for

more than six months, and the people of our last night's munzil told us, they did not expect to see their hills clear of it for three months to come. But villages are more frequent here than on the Turkish frontier: we saw them scattered in clusters in every valley. I do not mean to say that the country is populous, but that there are more traces of human life here than in the wastes of snow we have traversed, and that is pleasant, at least.

The first sight of the plain of Khoee, which we saw from a great height, covered though it was with snow, but spotted with numerous villages and orchards, was particularly cheering: "it did one's heart good to see it," as my friend Bonham said. But we had enough of that plain ere we reached our munzil this night, for it is very extensive, and we had to drive our weary horses and unwilling guides for three hours along it, ere we came to the city. To do our horses justice, the poor little cats behaved capitally: the day's march was a hard one, of at least forty miles, which we did in eleven hours, and the last three of them they trotted very smartly; nor were they by any means done up, even at the end of it. The plain was covered with ice and snow, though not to such a perplexing depth as we had been used to of late; and, on the whole, this was the least painful day's journey, in point of anxiety and danger, we had had since leaving Nixar, at the other extremity of Armenia, though it was abundantly fatiguing.

Our approach to the city was through a long succession of gardens, and there were great tracts of

ice, occasioned by the bursting and overflow of the water-courses. We had been told on the way that the city gates would be shut at sun-down, but pushed on in the belief that they would certainly be opened to couriers and persons on business: but when we reached the place there was no one to whom to proclaim our quality. The gate was not only shut but abandoned: at least, no one would answer to our appeals, though made with abundant vociferation and noise: so, after roaring ourselves hoarse for a quarter of an hour, we were forced to retreat and look for a caravanserai without the walls. Our blind guides, however, after leading us another half hour's dance, failed of discovering such an *hospitium*, and we were beholden to a stranger, at length, for conducting us to a lodging. This proved much in the style of our nightly receptacles for the last fortnight, a chamber railed off from a stable, but clean and fresh. The stable received our weary horses, and a rousing fire of wood soon made our frozen blood circulate, while preparations for a good pillaw gave promise of a comfortable supper, in which we were not disappointed.

20th February.—Our comforts, alas! ceased with this same supper; for on composing ourselves to rest, we found our stable not only as well peopled as that of the previous night, but its walls and floors absolute lumps of ice. It had not been inhabited for months before, and the heat of our fire had doubtless revived our torpid tormentors, who had been taking their winter's nap, though it was insufficient to thaw or warm the floor where we lay. "The beams

of the warm fire gleamed o'er it in vain;" and the cold struck through the numud, which our host had spread for us, to the very bones.

After a battle with our Persian *chupperchees*, who wanted to wring another day's hire out of us, though we had paid more than triple the proper fare from Kara Eineh, we loaded, and entered Khoee, proceeding at once to the house of my old friend, Meerza Reza, with whom you may remember that I made acquaintance at Resht, during my former travels in Persia. On hearing that two English gentlemen were inquiring for him, he soon joined and received us with much kindness. He easily recollected me: and it was pleasant, after our long and painful wanderings, to find ourselves in comparative comfort, and in the society of one, who, though not a countryman, could speak our language, and knew all our people in Persia. We soon fell into a chat about old stories, which was only interrupted by a visit from Ameer Aslan Khan Doombullee, the hereditary governor of the place, who bestowed upon us, good man, full three hours of his tediousness—for tediousness it was, in good sooth—although the khan is a perfectly well-bred Persian gentleman.

Although by no means an admirer of the Meerza in all respects, I cannot tell you how pleasant I felt it to gossip with him over past events, and to renew recollections that, though faded in intensity, can never be worn out. Many a one of my old acquaintances there was, of whose removal from this busy scene I had to hear; many the changes which a twelve

years' interval had wrought in a changeful country; but still there were some of whose welfare I was glad to learn; and it was gratifying to hear the manner in which he spoke of the late Prince Royal and his family. The former he called the Hope of Persia; the Sword of the State, by which the Shah, his father, punished the rebellious, and controlled the turbulent. Of his son, Mahomed Meerza, the heir presumptive, he spoke with respect, as a youth of much promise; but observed, that years must pass before he can hope to gain the ascendancy which his father had acquired in the kingdom. Of his brother, Jehangeer Meerza, he spoke as of a spirited young man, exceedingly attached to military matters and display, beloved by the soldiery, whose complaints he always listened to in person, and whom he paid with his own hands. But I had already had cause to believe, that whatever may be the natural endowments of this prince, he has given too many causes for dissatisfaction, both to his father and to his brother, now become his governor and master. Many other particulars regarding the political condition of the country did I gather from the Meerza; but as they would scarcely interest you much, I will spare you the detail, for the present at least, merely assuring you, that the evening closed in with more comfort than most of late, and that we addressed ourselves to sleep, in the hope of making an early start upon the morrow for Tabreez.

21st February. Disappointment of one sort or other, is sure to wither every hope that depends on

Persian faith and exertion. Learning that we had no chance of finding post-horses at the stations on the road between Khoee and Tabreez, we agreed last night with a *cherwadar*, or muleteer, to furnish us with horses that should take us the whole distance of about one hundred miles in three days; but this morning the fellow sent back the money he had taken as earnest, declaring his inability to perform his contract. He alleged that he had himself been disappointed by the persons who promised him horses,—he having none of his own! After having been kept waiting till eleven o'clock, another muleteer came, and telling us that the other man was a rogue—a truth we felt no disposition to deny—declared himself ready to take us to Tabreez, but that he must have four days to do it in, and a larger price, the whole of which was to be paid in advance. I need not tell you that we felt disposed to dismiss the fellow indignantly; but the Meerza over-persuaded us, asserting that the other was a knave, whom, *inshallah!* he should see punished, but that the present aspirant was a respectable man, whom we should be safe with. It was waxing late; we were anxious to get forward; and, having lost so much time already, saw nothing between us and want, save the frail reed of the Chupper Khaneh, so we growled and blustered a bit, and paid the money.

The clew to the whole transaction was just this: the rascal who cheated us was neither more nor less than servant to the second rogue with whom we closed. This latter, determined not only to secure

the job, but to do it at his leisure, sent the other to amuse us and keep us in play until it should be too late to negotiate with any other party. I have no doubt my friend the Meerza *touched* on the occasion, he so carefully kept out of the way while the business was going on.

Khoee, one of the few fortifications in Persia that approaches regularity, is a town of considerable size, and rather better laid out than usual; but the quantity of ice and snow that choked its streets, prevented me from forming any correct idea either of its populousness or condition. I observed many good houses in it, however, and though there was no want of ruins, the aspect of the place upon the whole was less mean than that of most towns in Persia. The bazar, through which I took a turn, though dull and rather ill-filled, was extensive, and kept in tolerable repair.

It was noon ere we left the gates, and proceeded across the plain to Seyed Hajee, a village at the foot of the eastern hills, not more than sixteen miles distant, and which, being the regular caravan mustering-stage, our muleteer would on no account pass. There was on this fine and populous plain, a much smaller quantity of snow than we had seen since entering Armenia; and as I had purchased a horse for myself at Khoee, for the huge price of about six pounds sterling; being moreover freed from all anxiety on the score of changing baggage-cattle, by our bargain with the muleteer, we travelled on in great comparative comfort. This comfort, it is true, did not accompany us in our first resting-

place, which, in spite of the prosperous-looking condition of the village, was as bad as any we had yet met with. In fact there was some difficulty at first in getting a lodging at all; for the place is inhabited by Seyeds, who, holy as they may consider themselves, were all, so far as our dealings with them could prove, most rude and insolent varlets.

We are now truly in Persia; I acknowledge the well-remembered character of its mountains and scenery, clad though they be in snow. On crossing the last gorge which led down upon the plain of Khoee, we took leave of the more earthy hills of Armenia, and hailed the rocky, ridgy, furrowed mountains of Azerbijan, rendered more striking in their aspect from the effect of the wind which had laid bare the edges of each ravine, and thus made every sharp height and narrow chasm more distinct upon the steep declivities.

22nd February. A calm bright night gave promise of a tranquil day; a promise which was broken almost before the sun was up, by which time we were on foot proceeding up the glen. The hills which bounded this defile are here formed of a curious stratified sandstone, and calcareous conglomerate, which changed, as we ascended, to a more uniform limestone. Before we had ridden two miles from the village, a snow-cloud that covered the higher mountains came sweeping down this glen, with a force that threatened to sweep us from our horses, and with a drift so fierce that all track was effaced in a moment. Our muleteer began to look anxious and prognosticate disasters in passing the

hill: but though the cold was severe, we found the snow diminish as we ascended, and after a short cut across a bit of table-land, we found ourselves looking down upon the Lake of Ooroomia, and the great plain of Tabreez. The lake itself was as dark as midnight, with a black snow-cloud hanging over it, and the plain, for the most part clear of snow, but still slightly streaked with it, looked grim and forbidding like an angry sea. In fact, I took it for such at first, that is, for part of the lake, and believed the snow to be the foam of the breaking waves; but the deception became apparent as we descended, and I saw that the waters were still distant. I can scarcely describe my sensations, when upon descending from this table-land, we found ourselves once more, after so many weary weeks of wandering among white and endless snow, treading the warm surface of the dear brown earth; but I can at least declare that they were those of deep thankfulness and delight, and our spirits rose as we rode along to the place appointed for our night's residence. This was at the village of Tessouj, where near twelve years ago I had spent a night with Colonel Monteith, when we surveyed this part of the country together: all was now familiar ground, and I felt as if I had a sort of home where our troubles would end.

Tessouj, or, as it is more nearly pronounced, Tesweech, is one of a number of very fine villages that are scattered on the skirts of the mountains that rise from the northern shore of the lake Shahee. The plain at their feet is rich and extensive, and is con-

tinuous with that which stretches to Tabreez. There is space for many more villages, and extensive ruins in various places give evidence that it once could boast of a much greater population than now. The village in question, though a thriving place, and containing more than a thousand souls, has more ruins than inhabitants within its precincts: but this is no uncommon matter in Persia. It is surrounded by vineyards and orchards, and every house has its own little garden. As we approached it, we met a great many serbâz, or Persian infantry, returning, as it seemed, from service. They had come, I believe, from Khorasan, and none of them seemed to be empty-handed: many of them had horses or mules, well loaded—the beasts and their burthens both, no doubt, honestly come by.

At this place, the only difficulty we had with respect to a lodging, was in choosing from among the number offered: we fixed at last on one which afforded a small cheerful room to ourselves, and the owner of which, a retired serbâz, and a very civil person, was most assiduous in his attentions. This was the more essential, as our Tatar for two days past had suffered so severely from inflammation of the eyes, in consequence of constant exposure to the glare of snow, as to be perfectly laid aside from work. During the whole of yesterday afternoon he had been quite blind, and in great pain. This morning he was rather better, and the comfort of getting rid of the snow had greatly tended to his relief, so that there is, please God, every hope of

his being comparatively well by to-morrow. It is not among the least of the blessings we have to be thankful for on this journey, that our eyes have been so remarkably preserved from an evil so very common to those who are obliged to travel much among snow.

23rd February. We were on horseback this day at a quarter before five. In settling for our lodging, our civil host gave proof that he had not been altogether disinterested in his attentions; but attention and civility are always worth paying for, and we left him no reason to complain of his guests. We did not long enjoy the pleasure of seeing mother earth in her comfortable russet garb. A few miles beyond the village we again encountered snow; not indeed enough to cause delay, but quite enough to remind us that we had not yet done with winter: in fact, it was hanging heavy in the clouds that obscured the sun, and there was a chill cold wind that confirmed the tale. The frost must indeed have been pretty intense, since the greatest part of the lake Ooroomia was frozen across, so that as we looked down towards Maragha, there was little water to be seen.

I think the number of ruins we passed in riding along to the fine large village of Deeza-khaleel, was greater than when I was here before with Monteith; yet this may be a deception, occasioned by the desolate aspect of the country in its wintry garb. Passing through Deeza-khaleel, we took up our quarters at Alleeshah, a miserable village two fursungs from the former, and good nine, or thirty-

six miles, from Tessouj, intending to load again a little after midnight, so as to reach Tabreez, still six fursungs or twenty-four miles distant, before breakfast. Our lodging is poor enough—just like those of Koordistan—a little chamber railed off from a stable, as cold and comfortless as possible, and where the bells of the mules and yaboos in the stable keep up an eternal tinkling; but it is our last on this side of Tabreez, and then, please God, the worst of our troubles are over.

24th February. Awoke at two, but were not in the saddle till half-past three, when, after a row with our rogue of a host, who, as is ever the case with bad things, charged triple the value for lodgings and fare, we started with the last of the moon, taking our way right across the plain for Tabreez. Till daylight we kept, for security, with our loads; but about half-past six, Bonham and I, leaving the Tatar with the baggage, let out our nags, and pushed on for the city. The road was bad, the snow was deep upon the plain, and the track all ribbed with the caravan steps; yet we trotted and cantered along in good style, passing the village of Mayan about eight. It was not without a curious thrill of recollection that I saw the old ark of Tabreez rising into view, and recognized the well-remembered environs: but assuredly the sensation with which I entered the gates of the town, after traversing the long extent of gardens, was that of unmingled thankfulness and pleasure. I paused for a moment as we passed the porch, forgetting which way to turn:—"Oh! I know my way," said Bonham; "follow

me." The snow flew from the heels of our horses, and in another moment we brought up the panting animals in the yard of the English residency. "How is Captain Macdonald?" was our first anxious question, as we sprang from our horses, — for we had heard on the road that this gentleman was very ill at Tabreez: — "Oh! better, much better," was the reply. "Thank God for that!" we exclaimed; and the thanksgiving was breathed, I believe, as much for ourselves as for him.

Our reception was all that was kind and delightful; and I leave you to conceive the joy that we felt in being thus at last relieved from our anxieties, and in safety and comfort under the roof of our countryman and the protection of the British flag. Much had we to hear and to communicate. Great had been the sickness and mortality here, and many the changes that had occurred, even lately, among which not the least painful was the death of my poor friend Cormack, who, worn out with illness, had sunk, alone and unattended, in a remote caravanserai of Khorasan. It was to this lamentable event that Macdonald owed his illness; for, proceeding towards Meyomeid, the place where poor Cormack died, in order to inquire into the circumstances of his death, and look after his effects, he was seized at Vuromeen with a malignant fever, which had for some time desolated that district, destroying men, women, and children, by thousands, — sweeping off the weak, and leaving the strong powerless. From thence he had proceeded to Tabreez on the same benevolent errand, but carrying

with him the dregs of the insidious malady, had by it again been reduced to the brink of the grave.

After a day of much interest and excitement, we dined after a Christian fashion, long a stranger to us, with Mr. Burgess, a gentleman who has settled himself here as a merchant, where we met with Seyed or Seidee Khan, a Persian, or rather an Armenian, well known in England as Saduc Beg, who came on more than one occasion to that country on business from his late Royal Highness Abbas Meerza. He is a man of very considerable ability, who speaks English perfectly, and associates much with the English. Few, perhaps, have had a life of more various adventure; and I am convinced that his history, if written by himself, and comprising his own observations on men and things, would form a most interesting volume. This gentleman invited us all to dine with him the next day, which invitation, as I found that the chupperkhaneh arrangements would not permit me to depart until the following one, I accepted with pleasure; and to be sure he did give us a feast. It was completely *à l'Anglaise*, the cookery, however, being not a little improved by the introduction of some capital native dishes. You would have been amused at seeing us poor famished travellers rioting in these good things,—first attacking the good roast mutton, and then flying off to the exquisite Naringe pillaw, or savoury kebaubs; then again returning, with true English taste, to the solid worth of the admirable plum-pudding! Nor were good liquors wanting to wash down these praiseworthy solids. The wines of Georgia and Tabreez

are far from contemptible; but we had also excellent Champaigne and London bottled porter, to raise our exhausted spirits and comfort our attenuated frames; and I assure you they stood in some need of it; for our continued hard work had relieved both my companion and myself of all superfluous fat, as completely as if we had passed through the training hands of a Crib or a Belcher.

The arrangements for our Chupper journey to Tehran, were by no means simple. The state of the roads and of the country, the former being, as we learned, as bad as possible from snow and mud, and the latter in many places overrun with thieves and banditti—Eeliaut tribes and disbanded serbâz, render proceeding rather precarious, both as to speed and safety. Then there is, it seems, no dependance whatever to be placed on the Chupper khaneh—scarcely a single station where horses are to be had—so I have come to the resolution of purchasing another yaboo (poney) or two; and getting on as fast as they, and the beasts we may pick up, can carry me. As for my friend Bonham, one of his eyes has been so much inflamed by sun and wind, as to render it highly imprudent for him to travel; so to my great sorrow he remains behind, to come on at greater leisure with Captain Macdonald, who is also about to return to Tehran; while I, taking a confidential gholaum of Sir J. Campbell's, who was at Tabreez, waiting for fresh despatches, have resolved to push forward to-morrow.

This irregularity in the Chupper khaneh between Tabreez and Tehran, has existed, I find, ever since

the campaigns of the late Prince Royal in Khorasan. The passage of troops along this line of road had given rise to great disorders, and occasioned the destruction or abandonment of many villages; and the requisition for couriers' horses had multiplied in a ratio so disproportioned to the very ill-paid allowances of the postmasters, that many of these worthies had made their escape with their cavalry, and left the couriers of Shah and Shahzadeh to get on as best they could. I was sorry to find too, that a part of this disorganization was to be attributed to the conduct of certain of the European officers in the service of his Royal Highness. Formerly the villagers had been forward to hire their horses to Europeans, and particularly to English gentlemen, who travelled the road; but in consequence of the violence which had been used on some occasions, they had now become alarmed, and sought to excuse themselves either by denying the possession of horses at all, or charging so extravagant a hire to those who do pay, as to compensate in some measure for the losses they sustain by those who press and maltreat their cattle.

And here, having with "mickle toil" brought you and myself to another resting-place in this long and weary journey, I will close my letter, although it will probably but accompany that which I shall commence to-morrow to give an account of my progress to Tehran, if it be the will of the Almighty that I reach it.—Adieu!

LETTER VIII.

Leave Tabreez.—Arrested by a Storm.—Caravanserai Gillekee.—Anecdote of Jehangeer Meerza.—Yaboo frozen.—A heavy stage.—Toorkomanchai.—Miana.—Humbugs.—Kafflan koh.—Serchum.—Zenjaun.—Sorry fare.—A Gholaum-peish-khidmut.—Sultanieh.—Khorum Derreh.—Siadehn.—A fray.—Câsveen.—Mahomed Shereef Khan.—State of the country.—The Khan's advice—His exertions.—Leave Câsveen.—Kishlac.—Suleemanieh.—Arrival at Tehran.

27th February.

I WRITE, dear——, from a small dirty crib in a caravanserai, not two days' journey from Tabreez, in a waste of snow that would have puzzled "Thalaba" himself, or even the indomitable Franklin and his intrepid companions, and which is increasing every moment by the storm, that has again brought me to a stand-still.

Yesterday, about two o'clock, I once more mounted my horse and left Tabreez, convoyed for a few miles by some of my friends, on my way to Seyedabad, a small Chupper station, about twenty miles from the city. The track was good so long as we kept the high road, but diverging from it for about a fursuck, to reach the village, we had a sad flounder; nevertheless we got housed in one of our customary berths, a stable, by a couple of hours after dark.

This morning we were on foot by four, but our commencement was unpropitious; for the road was deep, and snow was falling: we hoped that it might clear with the rising sun, but instead of that it darkened and thickened with every appearance of a feeding storm, as, after clearing the mountain pass of Shiblee, we traversed a weary succession of low hills and plains of snow, interminable to the eye. Nine hours brought us to the village of Thikmadas, where we halted for an hour to feed our horses and breakfast ourselves, after which we set our faces to the blast again, losing, very provokingly, a full fursuck, or four miles, by the distance of the village from the road.

The wind had now risen much, and was drifting the new-fallen snow, so that it was with great difficulty that we waded on for about another fursuck, passing the caravanserai Gillekee, and plunging again into the great white waste beyond it. We had already lowered our hopes of progress for the day to reaching a caravanserai near the Karachummun, instead of Toorkomanchai, which would have been the regular stage in moderate weather; and the increasing difficulty of the road and severity of storm had begun to give rise to uneasy doubts about getting on even so far, when one of the load-horses, probably liking appearances as little as ourselves, turned sharp round, and, plunging back through the snow, set off in spite of chupperchee and gholaum towards the village. The gholaum's attempts to catch it, and the clattering of his horse behind the startled animal, made it gallop the faster—so off he

jumped, and attempted to pursue it in his heavy boots and cloak, which he effected at the rate of two miles an hour. By this time the snow and drift were blinding, the road imperceptible, and it wanted but an hour of sunset. I had no doubt the gholaum would not catch the stray horse short of the village—this and his return would consume two hours at least: waiting in the storm for that time presented no very tempting prospect, so I just ordered the guide to turn tail and make our way back to the Caravanserai Gillekee, which we had so lately passed. To this the man full gladly assented, observing, that to reach the one a-head, even by daylight, in such weather, would be impossible, and what could he or any other man do at night and in such a storm as this?—So back we went, and with great difficulty, I assure you, reached this place from whence I now date. The gholaum Gregoor joined us near the gate, having fortunately caught his horse fast in the snow a little way beyond it.

Here we found a seraidar, who had established himself in one of the cells to dole out to muleteers and other travellers, at a high rate of profit, the few necessaries required in such a place; but not a habitable hole was to be had, all were occupied by storm-stayed guests, and it was not without some difficulty that we prevailed on the seraidar himself to give up to me one of the narrow platforms which ran along the sides of his own cell. Here at least we have shelter and food; for to our question of what he had to eat, he replied with as ready an "Everything," as e'er a Boniface in Christendom,

whose larder may contain one solitary dish, could respond to a like interrogatory from his hungry guest. The "everything," in this case meant bread, *roghun*, or clarified butter, stale eggs perhaps, tobacco, barley and straw, and a little rice:—so here were we soon installed, together with half-a-dozen muleteers and their boys, while the night, which for a moment made a faint essay towards improvement, assumed an aspect so threatening as to create serious fears for the future, even while it made us grateful for present shelter: for there was every appearance that the rest of our mountainous road might be impassably blocked up, and the winter, which had persecuted me for almost three months so unremittingly, thus give me one parting testimony of its good will and power.

28th February.—After a sorry supper of "*pillaw maigre*," to which I added a comforting dish of good tea, we laid ourselves down last night in our riding gear and went to sleep, lulled by the howling of the wind, which brought whole drifts of snow, both from heaven and earth, to fill up the yard of the caravanserai. This morning it blows a perfect hurricane; whether it snows or not we cannot tell, for the whole air is saturated with drift. Moving is impossible. This is hard—villanous luck; for one day's journey more would nearly have carried us out of the snow. But patience! There is no help for it; and thank Heaven we have at least a roof overhead.

In the midst of our mortification it amused me to observe our host at prayers. This is Friday, the Mussulman holiday; and he is one who affects ex-

ceeding strictness, so that his devotions should have been performed with more than ordinary solemnity; but there sat he before the fire-place, now clearing out the ashes and feeding the flame with brushwood, then reckoning up the sales of the preceding day; again ordering out straw and corn for the muleteers, scolding the *mehters,* and directing them how to groom the horses in the stable beyond; and in the intervals combing his beard, and "Allah-il-ullah"-ing it away with infinite emphasis.

This man confirmed to me an anecdote of Jehangeer Meerza, which I had already heard at Tabreez, but scarcely believed, and which I think you will allow was cause sufficient for my doubting the high character given by some people of that prince. A sooltaun, or captain in one of the regular regiments of Azerbijan, and a favourite with Abbas Meerza on account of certain important services he had performed, had received from that prince, on his return home, a remission of the government dues upon his village, to either the whole or half their amount, which was about four hundred tomauns. But Jehangeer Meerza, who was left governor of the province in the absence of his father and brother, so far from paying regard to this document, sent to levy the full demand. The order was resisted, upon the plea of the Prince Royal's acquittance; but Jehangeer, who wanted money, sent certain gholaums to enforce payment. Their insolence in executing this duty so exasperated not only the sooltaun but the villagers, that they rose on the gholaums, and beat and drove them from the place. But Jehangeer was not the man to permit resistance

of his orders; he resolved to inflict a signal punishment; and on pretext of considering the village (which was in the district of Selmâs) in rebellion, he sent a detachment of troops with certain of his confidential officers, who surrounded the place, and took prisoners the whole family of the sooltaun, except himself, who, with one wife and a child, escaped on a powerful horse to the country of the Hakkaree Koords, close by. The rest, with the chief of the villagers, and their wives and families, were all carried prisoners to Khoee, their houses and properties being plundered or destroyed. Arrived at Khoee, and brought before the prince, he ordered the whole party to be divided into three lots—the men, the women, and the children separately. The heads of the former were struck off at once; the females, after being given over to the soldiery and furoshes, were likewise put to death, or had their lives spared secretly by being made slaves of: accounts differ as to the treatment of the children; but you may imagine that the tender mercy evinced towards them partook of that displayed towards their parents. The sooltaun lives to feel and to revenge, no doubt, at a fitting time, the massacre of his family. The number of sufferers has been stated at three hundred. Some editions of this story make matters worse, and the murder of the villagers more sweeping still; that to which I have adhered is quite bad enough, and I have reason to believe it substantially correct; so much for the humanity, temper, and justice of Prince Jehangeer Meerza.

About ten o'clock the storm showed some dispo-

sition to abate: at all events the sun shone out, and the snow from the heavens ceased, though the air remained still filled with glittering particles in rapid movement. There were in the caravanserai some twelve or fifteen mules belonging to Seyed Khan, our Tabreez friend, with a party of his people going to Toorkomanchai. The improvement of the weather set these men all in motion, and the arrival of six persons on foot from a neighbouring caravanserai encouraged us all to start. I shall not readily forget the joy with which I saw these men enter our caravanserai, a proof that the road was practicable for foot-passengers, although for horses, they assured us, it was scarcely so; a fact of which we soon had experimental proof.

I ordered out my horses to start with the mules and people of Seyed Khan; but you may conceive my mortification at finding one of my own yaboos, when he was brought from the stable, so lame as scarcely to be able to stand. On examination, it appeared that one of the hind legs was frozen stiff and hard by the severity of the last night's weather. We walked it about for a considerable time, but in vain; the limb hung dead and useless from its body; cold, hard, and motionless as a stone. This was a most sore and unlooked for vexation. "It was not only," according to Caliban, "a disgrace, but an infinite loss;" nor was it the less provoking that it was caused altogether by the fault and carelessness of those to whose charge it had been entrusted. In the mean time no other was to be procured; and it became a question how we were to

get on without. At length, after about as much negotiation as might have served to settle the freight of a whole caravan of goods, I prevailed on one of Seyed Khan's muleteers to take the load, lightened of several articles, on one of his mules to the next stage; and having left the lame beast in charge of the seraidar, with a note to my Tabreez friends, who were about to come after me, we followed the rest of the party, which had left the place while this matter was being settled.

And now we had a specimen of what wind can do with snow. Of the deep and beaten track, along which yesterday the horses could travel in safety if not with ease, not a vestige remained, except where the new-fallen snow had been swept away bodily for some fifty or sixty yards, leaving the tough old mass immovable. The foot-prints of the men, who had passed scarcely half an hour before, were no longer visible. Even those of the mules, that were not ten minutes' march in advance of us, were obliterated before we could reach them; nay, before our very eyes the hoof-marks of two or three horses that preceded mine disappeared under my own feet as I followed, as though they had been made in water. The snow literally flowed along the surface as a stream, filling up every hollow in a moment, and the wind continued throughout the whole day as high and searching as it was when we started. I do not know that I ever suffered more. There was a large ruinous caravanserai, about half way on, called Dawatgeer, one of the many on this dreary road, the work

of pious and charitable people of former times, but now all dropping to pieces—emblems of the country itself. About this place, and all the way to Kara-chummun, the snow was frightfully deep, and the road particularly dangerous: had we not been preceded by a dozen of stout mules, and nearly as many men, we should never have made it out. As it was, the stage of three fursuks, or twelve miles, cost us more than six hours, and the *Euch Derrehler* (or three valleys) as the district is called, will live long in my memory, united with the pleasant recollections of the mountains of Karahissâr, and the passes of *Elmagh-dâgh*, *Dehâ*, and *Kazleegeul*. In fact, the whole tract of country, from the Shiblee pass to Toorkomanchai, is a succession of *Yeilâks* or mountain-pastures, in which, like that of Agajeek, they have generally six months of winter and snow, "and, when God pleases, seven." We got an excellent lodging at Kara chummun, and a good pillaw to revive our exhausted frames.

1st March. Our movements being dependant upon others, we could not make so early a start of it as we should have done had we been our own masters. Seyed Khan's mule still carried my load, and the muleteer was too much of a gentleman to move before sunrise. Indeed, without the party we should have made but poor way; for a more weary succession of heights and hollows than the first part of the march I never saw, with this special aggravation, that we had all the way to make for ourselves. I have described to you the usual progress of a caravan, under such circumstances, and

ours was somewhat of the same kind. Six men, with long sticks, went in front, plunging into the unbroken snow, and sounding for the old path, which, when found, was known by its hardness. When it could not be discovered, or was too deeply buried in fresh snow to be come at, they trod this fresh surface for some considerable distance in the proper direction, and then led on a loaded mule. It was curious to observe the semi-reluctant sagacity of this "forlorn hope," when forced to its task. On it went, plunging and floundering, till it could get no further. Then it would roll and tumble about for a while, from side to side, as if to consolidate the snow; after which it would lie perfectly quiet until the men came to assist it, which they generally did, four in number, one taking the head, another lifting it by the tail, and one on each side. A succession of such flounderings brought him through the bad step. The next fared no better; on the contrary, his feet generally sank even deeper into the soft snow-wreath, so that he had less power to extricate himself than his precursor; and great, for the most part, was the trouble with him. The third had an easier task; the snow being now somewhat trodden became more solid under foot, while that above waxed looser; and thus not only he, but every one succeeding him, had less and less difficulty.

Still you may imagine how slow and wearisome our progress was. The old road might here and there be found for a space of fifty or a hundred yards together, but in general we had to fight every inch of our way in the manner I have described. In

three hours we only accomplished four miles, and I must say that I never in any situation saw more indomitable perseverance displayed than by these rough rogues of muleteers in their most trying work; in truth, their courage and indefatigable patience in the hard duties of their trade, form a strong relieving point in a character which, in other respects, is none of the most engaging.

After we had struggled through the distance I have mentioned, our ears were greeted by a joyful cry from the foremost of the people—"A caravan! a caravan is coming!"—and certainly, no sound nor sight could have been more gratifying in our distress, than that of the approaching small party—unless, indeed, that of a larger one. But, in fact, it did prove to be but the precursor of a considerable body, which had become subdivided into many parties; and thus was the barrier to our progress, raised by that unlucky storm which had opposed us so obstinately for the last two days, at once thrown down and removed.

The approach of a caravan in the desert has often been described, and as often been compared with some other striking or picturesque object; such, for instance, as that of a fleet at sea. But a caravan labouring in these immense tracts of snow, these white, pathless, frozen wastes, is a far more helpless, and therefore a more touching object, than a cluster of gallant ships marching on the waves of their own proper element: nothing can more vividly and forcibly figure forth the helpless insignificance of man, for truly may it be said, "the wind passeth over it, and

it is gone!" Let but a breath of the mighty wind, which dwells for ever in these mountains, and which seldom ceases to vex them, blow upon it, and where are they who formed it? Yet the meeting of two caravans, under such circumstances, does greatly resemble that of two single ships in the vast ocean—both are sensible of their loneliness, and, therefore, regard each other as friends, and many are the eager inquiries that pass and repass between them. I think I see the two gallant vessels approaching in seaman-like style and rounding-to, as the courses are clewed up, and the maintopsails of each fly round to the mast; but it is not the "Whence come you?—whither bound?—how long out?—where do you make yourself out to be?—what is the news?"—and all the rest of marine inquiries; but "How is the road you have come?"—"*Alhumdulillah!* good—safe by the mercy of God!"—"And such and such a pass—how is it?"—"Oh, *mooskil*—very difficult; but we have opened it to you."—"And you have had much snow?"—"*Bessyâr*, *bessyâr!* a great deal; but you will get through, *inchallah!*"—"How many hours are we from so and so?"—"Six hours."—"And the road, how is it?"—"Ah, bad, very bad, yesterday; but, *Alhumdulillah*, it is better now; you will be able to get on—there are plenty of you, thank God!"—"Yes, yes! *inchallah*, we shall do."—"*Inchallah, inchallah!*" And, then, there are the greetings of friends and acquaintance, particularly among the muleteers themselves, who have always much to ask and to learn: this occupies some time; and then come the mutual compliments at parting;

the "*Khodah hafiz shumah!—khodah humrae shumah bashud!— khooshgueldee, khooskgueldee!* — may God protect you! may the Almighty be your companion! may his peace rest with you, *inshallah!*" And then are heard the parting shouts, and the tingling of bells, as each line separates and pursues its opposite course until the sounds are lost in distance.

In the present case, the leading party consisted of Hoossein Khan, meerachor, or master of the horse to Feridoon Meerza, on his return from Kerbelah with his own women, and one of Abbas Meerza's wives; and these were followed by a good number of mules laden with their *yekdoons*, or trunks, and muffrushes with bedding, and sumpter mules with cooking apparatus, and servants, &c. &c., which made a broad and open track: yet, still so deep and heavy was the snow, that it took us six hours to complete the stage of four fursucks, or sixteen miles, from Karachummun to Toorkomanchai. This is the place where, in 1828, the last treaty of peace was signed between Russia and Persia, and, therefore, now well known to fame, although it is but a village of inconsiderable magnitude in one of the hollows among the waving down-like hills that skirt the great northern range; and there is no river near it, as the termination of its name (*chai*, a river in Turkish,) would seem to imply.

The weather of to-day, if not the road, was in striking contrast to that of yesterday; instead of the threatening cloudy sky and fierce, cutting wind almost right in our front, which vexed us the whole of yesterday, we had now a powerful sun, shining

from a bright sky, and whatever air was moving blew in our backs; so that being accoutred and wrapped up to keep out the cold to which we had so long been exposed, we actually suffered in the middle of the day from heat, and very much from the glare of the shining snow.

Changing horses at Toorkomanchai, we proceeded by another small village, Hadjeria, to a point where the country falls by a great though gradual descent to the more general level; nor have we, thank Heaven, to return to our altitudes again, except for a short way at Sultanieh. As we passed through these villages we saw all the people out of doors basking in the sunshine in front of their houses, enjoying the heat, like bees in an unexpected warm blink in early spring.

The road to Miana, seven good fursucks, or twenty-eight miles, lies among a succession of heights and hollows that furrow the skirts of the high tract we had been keeping, and from their great abruptness of ascent and descent, make this a very toilsome stage. It was now rendered more so than ordinarily from a partial melting of the snow, which turned the light soil underneath into a slippery and tenacious mud. Our horses too were desperately bad; and one of them, which carried a load, was so particularly obstinate, that we had to make it change burthens with that of the chupperchee, to whom, by way of *persuader*, Gregoor handed his knife or dagger to be used as a spur. The humanity of the expedient might be questionable, and might have brought our friends within the operation of Mr. Martin's act;

but Persian knives seldom possess the quality of sharpness, — it appealed to the animal's sense of feeling without inflicting any serious injury, and so, being a gainer by the expedient, I let it pass.

After a weary while, and frequently fording a rapid stream that was carrying down with it much ice, about nine at night we reached a point where it was to be crossed for the last time in order to reach the village. Here, as if winter had desired to give us a parting token of good-will, we experienced a *contretemps* of a novel and somewhat serious nature. There was a large tract overflowed by water, covered with ice, some bearing, and some, from springs and running streams, unsound; but pass across it we must. In doing so, the chupperchee, who was riding the horse with the despatches, pushed forward; the ice broke, and in fell horse, chupperchee, "bags and all!" into a deep hole. The night succeeding our sunny day was bitter cold— it froze so that my boots were glued to the stirrups, and I was obliged to pull my feet out of them in order to disengage myself, so that this was not only an untoward, but a very alarming accident— the man might be frozen to death before we knew where we were: we fished him out, however, before he was drowned or frozen, though with no small risk and difficulty, for the whole party were near meeting the same fate: but we lost a full hour before bags and horse were recovered, and to extricate the latter we were forced to break the ice all the way till we came to a shallow spot from whence he could spring out upon the bearing ice.

It was near eleven o'clock when we reached Miana, nearly dead with cold, after being more than sixteen hours in the saddle. On arriving we found the master of the chupperkhaneh just dead; so that, instead of a comfortable lodging and good fare, we got miserable quarters and no fare, except a morsel of stale bread and some crumbs of vile cheese: but we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had passed the worst of our journey, and all accounts of the Kafflan-koh, that well-known mountain pass from Azerbijan into Irâk, and the only remaining point of difficulty on this side of Tehran, led us to hope we should cross it without much inconvenience. So we comforted ourselves with a cup of capital tea, ate our bread and cheese, and betook ourselves to rest without ever thinking of the poisonous *bug* of Miana. You may perhaps have heard of this insect, and I think I see the shudder you give at the very thought of its venom: yet after all, to make use of an old pun, I suspect it to be a *hum-bug*. The people of the place indeed, declare that the bug which abounds at Miana does bite strangers, and that its bite produces much inconvenience, and sometimes death: yet such instances are so rare, that none of those of whom I inquired regarding it, could say they recollected a case. No pain is felt at the time, and its effects are said to be first evinced by languor and weakness, which increase till death ensues. The cure consists in a milk diet and abstinence from animal food. The truth I believe is, that Miana being a marshy, unhealthy district, strangers are frequently attacked

in it by the low fever peculiar to such situations, and as the place does happen to abound with a particular sort of bug, the fever is attributed to its bite. This insect is somewhat larger than a common bug, and frequents old buildings, bazars, and caravanserais, which are commonly ill swept and dirty. For my own part, I neither saw nor felt any.

You would have been amused with a method which I saw taken this night to extinguish a fire. A boy had placed a lamp so near a beam of the house as to set it on fire—the whole edifice was of a combustible character, and the affair might have flurried some people—the youngster merely removed the lamp, *spat* upon the burning wood, and patted it with his hand till it went out; the engine was neither very powerful nor very elegant, but proved sufficiently effectual. It is quite remarkable how careless the people are in such matters, and yet how few accidents occur. "Now, that plank would burn in any other part of the world," said my friend Bonham, one evening to me, pointing out what one would have held to be a very dangerous proximity between a lamp and a great slab of wood in one of our munzils; but it did not burn, and such carelessness and impunity would almost tempt one to believe that wood had lost its inflammability in these parts; but the pitcher may go once too often to the well, as the frequent fires in Constantinople sufficiently prove.

2nd March. Our cattle had had so fatiguing a march yesterday, and reached their munzil so late, that I did not attempt an early move. The people

of the chupperkhaneh made it nearly nine in the morning ere we got into motion; but as, in all probability, we should not have been able to make more than the one long stage, it mattered the less. So breakfasting on the same meagre fare as that on which we supped last night, we started with every prospect of a pleasant ride. It was a lovely morning, and the sight of a black patch of earth here and there was exhilarating: indeed, snow had begun to diminish greatly from the top of our descent near Hadjeria, and we hoped that, once past the great ridge of mountains that now rose white enough in front of us, our difficulties would terminate. The pass of the Kafflankoh crosses this range, which here divides Azerbijan from Irak, just at the point where the Kizzil-ozun bursts through a dark chasm, which it has worn in them, on its way, by the districts of Tarum and Khumsa, to Gheelan and the Caspian.

We passed the Miana river, swelled by snow-water and grim with floating ice, by a fine bridge, after fording two considerable streams, its branches, I believe. The bridge, like all that is good and worthy in Persia, is fast going to decay. At one hour from the village we began to ascend the pass, which occupied us one and a half more; the descent might consume about the same time; and, on the whole, I found it about one of the easiest mountain-passes I had ever crossed—so much for common report in speaking formidably of the Kafflankoh. In fact, the height is not great, and the road has been regularly made more than once; first, I believe, by the Turks, who, when they invaded Persia, made a causeway across

it, by which guns might easily be dragged, and part of which is still to be seen: then the Russians, in 1828, repaired such places as needed it for facilitating the same object. Perhaps the monotonous effect of the snow diminished the effect and apparent height of the mountains, but I was disappointed with the scenery, and all about the place. The bridge on the Irak side, over the Kizzil-ozun, is an old though solid structure, much in the same condition as that over the Miana stream, and will soon become impassable, if not repaired.

My friend Gregoor (the gholaum) amused me this morning by an exploit, which, I have no doubt, was intended to give me a high opinion of his firmness and activity, qualities in which, no doubt, conscience told him he had been somewhat deficient. On the way up the pass we overtook a caravan of asses, which stopped our progress by occupying the beaten track, and the drivers proving sulky, or dilatory, he spurred his horse in among them, burned their fathers, abused their mothers, and upset some half-a-dozen of the beasts, loads and all, into the snow, to the horror of the owners and riders, who, taking the hint, somewhat of the latest, made out of the way of such a desperado. We next overtook a long string of camels; but as *sarwans*, or camel-drivers, are proverbially "coarse fellows" to deal with, Master Gregoor's discretion here came into play, and he confined his intervention to a civil request that they would stop till we should pass. This, to my surprise, they did, and we got clear of the impediment without collision. This meeting of

caravans in the track, which only admits of one at a time to move in it, is always attended with inconvenience, as the party giving way and swerving from the path must sink into the soft snow.

Beyond the bridge the road splits into two, one of which leads through the upper country by Akhend, the regular chupper station, and through snow-covered hills: the other keeps the low ground by Serchum and Neepké, where there is no post-station; but, weary of the eternal heights and snow, by this we determined to proceed, much to the displeasure of the chupperchee, who fought stoutly to keep the upper road. The hills which enclose the valley, that we now entered, have their earthy skirts ploughed into innumerable ravines, among which we wound for awhile, until, at length, crossing a succession of long waving heights, having their abrupt faces turned westward, we reached our munzil, Serchum, by four o'clock, resolved to make a bold push for Zenjaun on the morrow.

The whole of this valley seems to be of alluvial formation; the hills are earthy, and the lines of horizontal strata on their sides confirm the belief. It was a lamentable symptom of the condition of the country, that in the whole of this obviously fertile tract we saw but one inhabited village.

3rd March. A practical illustration of "the biters bitten" was exhibited this morning at our expense, in a fashion that considerably deranged our plans of activity for the day, and sorely excited our choler. Serchum affording no horses for hire, we had resolved on carrying those brought from Miana to

Neepké, at all events, if not to Zenjaun: and, in order to secure ourselves from disappointment, had bestowed them in a snug inner stable, from whence they were not to be taken without our knowledge. The chupperchee, the rogue, feigned acquiescence, on promise of a solid guerdon; and we, lulled into security, after a better meal than at Miana, retired to rest, resolved to be in the saddle long before daylight. We were on foot early enough: but it was to discover that our precious chupperchee had taken the best of the horses out of the stable, on pretence of giving it water, and coolly ridden away with it. I heard the fray, but first learned the cause from Gregoor, who, after exhausting on the culprit every form and phrase of Persian abuse, set himself down, stared about him, gasping with a most ludicrous stupidity of expression, and then, I suppose to convince me of how very angry he was, closed his formula of malediction with three solemn G—d d—s, in English. But even these would not bring back the runaway, so we had nothing left for it but to try what bribery would do with the villagers; and by dint of a long price we did secure a miserable yaboo to go twenty-eight miles to Neepké.

After all we were off a little after four on a splendid frosty morning; but the road proved to be in the birdlime state, between melting snow and mud; our cattle were bad, and our guide stupid or obstinate, so that it was past noon before we completed the stage of only seven fursucks. At Neepké, though we could get nothing to eat except some hot milk and bread, we procured horses with less delay

than usual, and got away in an hour. But the loads went wrong, and the way was tedious and uneven, so that it seemed an age till we reached the gates of Zenjaun, even after being told we were close to them; and weary enough were both horses and men,—when, after threading the long ruinous bazar, and diving into many a queer hole and corner, we found ourselves at the chupperkhaneh, as miserable a den as any we had seen.

The "travellers'-room" of this receptacle was a dirty apartment, exalted some six feet above the stable, and it was occupied by a Gholaum-peish-khidmut of the late Prince Royal, on his way *chupperee*, like myself, to Teheran, and another courier, who was sick. All was discomfort. The Gholaum-peish-khidmut, a great man in his way, had monopolized the only decent numud; so that except a little carpet, which I had bought at Tabreez, there was nothing for me to lie on. The place was full of trash — bales of goods, bags of corn, parcels, old saddles and harness, and all manner of confusion; and as there was no knowing what the sick courier's illness might be, I thought fit to make interest for a private room. But this was a luxury not to be had at Zenjaun; and it appeared that my expectations, in the way of food, had need to be as moderate as my lodging was homely; for after great fuss and delay, all they could produce was a little bread, some frozen honey, and uneatable cheese. I must say that my stomach, which was as empty as a beggar's purse, was sorely offended at this display, and in as mild a tone as I could assume, I made some

tolerably bitter remarks upon the hospitality of Zenjaunees, and the choiceness of their travellers' fare. These wrung from the Gholaum-peish-khidmut not only an acknowledgment of shame for the deficiencies of his countrymen, but such an abuse of the officials who held the post, that after swearing there was not a kebaub, nor even an egg, to be found in all Zenjaun, (although it was but nine o'clock in the evening,) they went and brought an old cock to be slain for my supper. The cries of the already half-throttled bird gave me the first intimation of this beneficent provision, and suspecting the truth, I begged and obtained its life upon the plea that it was now too late to be of use to me. The return made by the (no doubt) grateful creature was to take up a position on a beam close to my ear, and crow all night long in a tone not improved by the violence that had been inflicted on its unhappy throat. This larum, with the groans of the sick man, which were incessant, and the customary host of lesser intruders, effectually deprived me of sleep.

4th March.—The high demands made upon the chupperkhaneh by the two parties for horses, amounting to no less than eight, occasioned our detention till eight o'clock this morning; when, after a breakfast upon eggs and good bread, procured for me by Gregoor, together with a good cup of tea, we proceeded on our journey, accompanied by the Gholaum-peish-khidmut. Having entered Zenjaun at night, and left it next morning by a path leading through a burying-ground, I can tell you little of

the place, except that I heard the clink of many hammers and the bustle of business very early, close to the chupperkaneh in a little square, which argues something like a brisk trade; and as Zenjaun is the capital of a large district, and the residence of a prince of the blood, no doubt it must be a considerable commercial mart.

Our way lay in the course of the Zenjaun river, between two low ranges of hills, to Sultanieh, twenty-two miles, which we performed in less than five hours: for though snow increased again with our gradual ascent, the track was good, so that it did not impede us much. Sultanieh is a miserable little town, remarkable chiefly for the fine mausoleum of Sultaun Mahomed Khodah-bundeh, a descendant of Chenghiz, and the first Persian monarch who professed himself of the Sheah faith. It is a quadrangular building of capital brick-work, with a lofty dome. But this place is further known as the encamping ground where the Shah used for many years to pass the hot months with his army and women, and hunt and enjoy himself. There is therefore, here, a sort of palace—a mud and straw concern, somewhat unhappily contrasted with the solid structure of the olden time, which yields slowly to a decay that is rapidly overtaking its ephemeral neighbour; for since the Russians, in 1828, approached so near as Toorkomanchai, his majesty, disgusted, has deigned to come here no more, and the dwelling is suffered to go to decay like all things not in immediate use.

Our next stage was to Khorum-derreh, or the

"valley of delight;" and a curious spot it is, and no doubt a pleasant, in spring and summer; for it lies in the bed of a river, with quantities of water and a forest of gardens about it. But we had no pleasure either in it or in the long dreary uninteresting tract through which we rode to it from Sultanieh. The stage is called seven, but is acknowledged to be eight, good fursucks, or thirty-two miles of road; and of many a weary tramp this certainly was not the least tedious; for as our friend the Gholaum-peish-khidmut had wisely secured the best horses for himself, ours were bad, and the loads were put upon two mules, the slowest and most cross-grained, surely, of a slow and cross-grained generation. Neither lead nor drive would they, and it is not to be told at what an expense of whip and voice, and labour, we accomplished the stage in eleven hours. We had left Sultanieh at two in the afternoon, and did not arrive at Khorum-derreh till one in the morning, and well frozen and fagged were we, and hungry withal; but the Peish-khidmut, who was so indignant at my bad treatment at Zenjaun, and who, taking advantage of his better cattle, had rode forward, assuring me that *he* would be henceforth my Mehmandar, proved a deceiver like the rest of his kind,—nothing did he provide, and a pot of tea and two or three eggs were all that could be procured, which having swallowed, I went to a rest that I much needed.

5th March. Last night's hard work, and the difficulty of getting horses, made us late to-day. The experience of yesterday had frightened us at mules;

but nothing else being procurable we were at last forced to take them; and I must say had no reason to complain of their performance. We were in the saddle by eight of a lovely morning, and held our way along the same broad valley, which, varying in altitude, stretches between two ranges of inconsiderable hills from Zenjaun all the way to Casveen, where it opens into an extensive plain, having the Elburz on the north, and another fine imposing chain of mountains on the south. The highest point of this valley is called Tengee Allee Akber, about four miles east of Sultanieh.

The snow, which had lessened again in depth, as we descended this inclined plane to Khorum-derreh, gradually disappeared as we left it, until all that remained was but a patch here and there in a hollow, and the white mantles of the distant mountains, which glittered like huge sugar-loaves. I leave you to imagine the delight with which we found ourselves once more not only treading on the solid earth, but gazing forward on an extent of quiet brown plain, on which our harassed eyes could rest with comfort, instead of the eternal white wastes of dreary blinding snow: and though Persian scenery is not the most inviting in the world, it was with sincere joy that I hailed its brown and arid character this day. There were the earthy mountains, with their soft purple-grey hue, craggy crests, earthy skirts, and *tuppehs;* and there were the long gravelly slopes, sweeping from either range to the rich loamy steep in the centre; and there was the little stream that runs in the bottom, now swelled with

the melting snow. Yet it is wonderful to see how little of a flood or torrent is produced by the immense quantity of snow; the thirsty soil seems to drink it all up, so that scarcely any remains to run off.

As we emerged from a sort of gorge at the bottom of the valley, near Siadehn, our stage, we were greeted by the first symptoms of approaching spring; and, oh, how delicious they were to our winter-buffeted souls! The quiet stealing little emerald tint of some small shoots of grass, issuing from among the dry tufts, was the first thing that attracted my notice; and this was so plentiful in one spot as to give a slight tinge of green to the whole slope: but I could scarcely believe my eyes, when, riding a little further on, I perceived some white star-like flowers bursting from the bare soil. I passed the first cluster, believing I was deceived, and had taken white pebbles for blossoms; but a second group was not to be mistaken, and you would have smiled to see me spring from my horse, as I did, and dig up the little beauties from their hard bed. They were stars of six white petals, with a yellow centre, not unlike a small crocus, with a fine honied smell, and the ground soon became covered with them as we advanced. The wind, though high, was quite the breath of spring; the larks were twittering and carolling high in air; the beetles were hard at work on every bit of litter on the path; and there was a joy in the whole scene, a sense of deliverance and freedom, in looking once more on the fair face of nature without her ermine mantle, although the

garb she wore was homely enough, that raised my spirits higher than they had been for many a day, and filled me with thankfulness for the past and hope for the future, in spite of its uncertainty.

The hills were covered with the flocks of the peasants, cropping the first fruits of spring; but we saw, too, that the pleasant season had tempted forth more troublesome customers. These were a tribe of *Karatchees*, that is, gipsies, who had pitched their black tents on the south side of a hill, from which, as we learned, they looked out for travellers, and descended to plunder all such as they thought they could overpower. Only the day before they had stripped several foot-passengers; and such being the case we made ready to give them a warm reception, in case of an attack. But though we saw some of their spies on the look-out, and though they all mustered at their tent-doors as we passed, they contented themselves with gazing at us, and we pursued our way unmolested. It was remarkable, indeed, how careless they appeared to be about their own property. A dozen and more of their best brood mares were grazing by the road-side, without an attendant, at the mercy, it might be imagined, of every passer-by. I dare say, however, had any attempt been made to seize one, a guardian would not have been long in making himself visible. These mares were all clad in body-clothes, like pet animals, and much better dressed than any of their masters.

We reached Siadehn early, but were not a bit nearer to our hopes of getting on. The old story, "no horses;"—but we are now under the shadow of

"the king of kings," who gives himself no concern whatever about such mean affairs as chupperkhanehs, any more than other matters, and still less thinks of paying the masters of such establishments—no wonder, therefore, there are no horses. Thus, perforce, we took up our quarters for the night, relying on some good chance to procure us the means of proceeding on the morrow.

Our lodging was tolerable—the chupperchee was brother or kindred to the Gholaum-peish-khidmut (Mahomed Saleh Beg), and he took some pains to please us; but although Gregoor had given him money to procure food and provide a good dinner for us, our fare was restricted to pillaw, *maigre*, and a few eggs, of which my friend secured his own share at least. This same Gholaum-peish-khidmut was, as I had cause to see, one of a class not peculiar to Persia,—though common enough in that country, Heaven knows! especially among what is there called the *Nowker-bâb*, or court dependents and military orders—a jolly, boasting, bullying, selfish fellow, who cringes to the great, and lords it over the small, and never loses sight of his own interest or comfort; a *khoosh goozerân*, as they term it; a *bon vivant*, fond of all the good things of this world, and careless as to the means of procuring them; yet capable enough of roughing it, as I must say all Persians are. In associating himself with me, he had consulted only his own comfort and convenience; he purposed to travel at my expense, made no scruple at sacrificing all my interests to his own objects, and, no doubt, expected to make the same use of me as he

had hitherto done all the way to Tehran. I saw, too, that he was in no hurry to terminate his journey, and, therefore, wished to detain me to suit his purposes: in short, he was a clog to me and no assistance, and as such I resolved to shake him off the first opportunity.

6th March. This morning was ushered in with some specimens of Persian behaviour, more characteristic than agreeable. There were two roads, it appeared, by which we might proceed to Tehran, now little more than a hundred miles distant; but the lower one, which was the shortest, was, they told us, so deep in mud from the melted snow, that no loaded cattle could make it out, and several had been already lost in the attempt: so we resolved to go round the far longer route, along the gravelly slope of the hills, which would take us through Câsveen. Now Gregoor had agreed with the Khorum-derreh people to carry us this morning with their cattle to Câsveen. They had even taken the money, and we had no reason to mistrust their sincerity; yet the rogues made off in the night with their horses and the money too. This felonious escape became known at daylight, and out sallied the two gholaums, not improved in temper, with the people of the chupperkhaneh, to press horses. In a short while one or two were dragged hurriedly, and "*ingenti clamore*," into the yard of the post-house, while the unfortunate owners kept roaring and crying outside, and would neither be comforted nor contented. The consequence of these strong measures was a rising of the villagers *en*

masse, and in less than a quarter of an hour there was a fine tumult. In rushed the postmaster and grasped his sword; his men seized great sticks, and out again they rushed, in furious mood and with desperate threats of violence.

Not a little anxious about the result, I followed them to the gate, and great, to be sure, was the row and loud the uproar outside. The postmaster's party rushed with much spirit among the villagers, and there was a battle royal, in which many heavy blows were given and received; but as they fell mostly on the thick *poosteens* and felt jackets, or thicker heads of the natives, the damage done was small. At first, indeed, I remarked a singularly cautious reserve, accompanying the actions of even the most violent, which obviously lessened the weight of the strokes, and restrained the force of those who might have thrown in some heavy floorers. There were several persons, too, who busied themselves in holding back the combatants, and who accordingly came in for the "redders strake." But as the fray continued, wrath waxed fiercer; swords and knives were drawn, and the villagers brought out their *beels*, or long-handled spades, very formidable weapons, a stroke from which would have as effectually opened up a clod-pate, as a clod of the valley; everything looked serious, and I did really begin to anticipate ugly consequences; still, however, they kept chiefly to the sticks. Blood and murder are ugly things to deal in, and men seldom care to commit or expose themselves to the chance of either without strong cause.

And then out came the women, like the gods in an epic, just in the nick of time, and threw themselves, screeching and screaming like sea-gulls in a gale, into the thickest of the fray, where they exerted themselves so powerfully, that a separation was after a while effected. But the mutterings of the storm continued still, and many a fierce defiance was thundered out in language not the most becoming, as each party stood mustering sulkily behind its leaders. A single word, one might have thought, would set all by the ears again; but somehow or other that word was not spoken,—the squall blew over, and quiet was restored without further mischief. On the whole it was a mighty promising row, and some pretty-enough broken heads were given and received too; yet I do believe that two jolly paddies "from Donnybrook fair," with a drop in their heads, and shilelahs in their hands, would have put the whole set to the rout.

During all this uproar, it was curious enough to observe the two gholaums who had caused it, sitting quietly on their carpet, gazing like unconcerned spectators, and waiting the termination of a scene which to them was doubtless no novelty. Neither was any violence offered to their persons; the whole wrath of the villagers was directed against the postmaster and his myrmidons.

An incident of a very different character marked this tumultuous scene. A poor goat in the family-way, that happened to be close by, frightened no doubt by the uproar, fell into labour, and speedily produced twins; and it was impossible not to be

struck by the singular contrast between the poor mother licking its trembling young ones, with newly-awakened affection, and the fierce passions of fury and hatred displayed around it by the "lords of the creation."

When the growling had subsided, an inquiry was set on foot in earnest for horses, of which the people now declared they could give us none at all. No doubt they did not believe the Gholaum-peish-khidmut's protestations that he would pay for any he took; and as for me, they took it, or it was put into their heads, that I wanted to carry their horses on all the way to Tehran. Remonstrance was as useless as force. So Mahomed Saleh Beg was forced to mount some *yeduks* (or spare horses) which he was carrying with him; and as for me, Gregoor was forced to put up with a Tehran rip that had been left to recover health and flesh after a chupper journey from that place, (a process which it had by no means as yet accomplished,) and after much negotiation, he bribed the owner of a horse and mule to hire them and accompany them himself with us to Câsveen. So after this stormy morning we set forth, about nine o'clock, for the city.

The road, a dead level of twenty miles, across a flat, loamy, well-cultivated plain, the tenacious mud of which rendered our progress very difficult, occupied us six hours. We entered the ancient city of Câsveen about three o'clock, through a long succession of gardens; but instead of going to the chupperkhaneh, I went, by the advice of Gregoor, direct to the house of Mahomed Shereef Khan, the sub-

governor of the city, a gentleman well known to the English, and by whom I was politely received, and accommodated with a comfortable apartment.

My first request, as you may anticipate, was for horses, to proceed immediately. But great as my difficulties were at Siadehn, it did not at first appear likely that they would be diminished here. I had arrived, it appeared, at a most unlucky time; when, indeed, had our luck been better since entering the country? There were but two horses, they assured us, in the chupperkhaneh, and the difficulty of hiring cattle had been increased an hundredfold by the departure yesterday of Meerza Nubbee Khan, a grandee of the place, with a large train, for court, and the expected journey to the same place of Allee Nukee Meerza, the prince-governor of the city and district.

This Meerza Nubbee Khan is a son-in-law of the "king of kings," a connection which places him at once among the royal family, in the rank of the "Shahzadehs," and entitles him, as it would appear, to oppress and squeeze his majesty's lieges right and left. Accordingly, wanting beasts to carry his attendants and baggage, he sent people into the bazars, and pressed every horse and mule he could find, to the number of nearly one hundred and fifty, without even a show of satisfying the owners in the matter of hire. The prince himself, it is known, will require a still greater number; and this has so frightened the owners of baggage-cattle, that they have concealed every animal with four legs; nor will they be tempted to produce them by the offer

of money, or by the cash itself, even if put into their hand; for it is a trick to which great men and their minions often have recourse, and when the beasts are once secured they wrest the money from the owners by force; thus Gregoor, even when he produced the coin, met everywhere with decided refusals.

All this was discouraging enough, yet Shereef Khan bade me be of good cheer; he was, he said, the friend of the English. The British Resident and Mr. Macniel were his brothers—men for whom he would do anything. His house, and all it contained, was Sir John Campbell's, and Sir John's was his; for these gentlemen's sakes horses should be found for me, were he even to give his own. We readily believe what we wish; and although there was much both in the matter as well as the manner of the Khan's harangue to beget mistrust, in spite of my better reason I permitted myself to hope that my stay at Câsveen would be very short.

My friend, the Khan, is, in fact, a good specimen of the true Persian courtier. His age may range from forty-five to forty-seven; his person is thin and tall, his features very good, being less exaggerated than those of most Persians. His nose is high, but well formed, his eyes fine and somewhat sleepy, but lighting up upon occasions with a good deal of fire. His mouth, scarcely discernible through the long bushy black beard, displays only a bit of red lip, and some fine white teeth, yet you can catch the pleasant expression of its least smile. His cheeks

are thin and lank, his air gracious, but tinged, as well as his speech and expression, with an air of condescension, which shows that he fully appreciates his own worth and station; but to his superiors this gives way to an air of profound respect. His manners, on the whole, are much those of a Persian gentleman, while his conduct is that of a thorough-bred courtier, with far more of profession than of principle or of practice, and a little tinged with what we should be apt to term meanness. For instance, having sat for a long while after my arrival without the offer of food, I sent to the bazar for some eatables. The Khan, when he heard this, professed much displeasure; yet in the evening he sent me a request for all the tea I might have to spare, hinting that Tehran was not now far distant. This did appear a little singular after his display of magnificence and profuse offers of assistance; perhaps it shook my opinion of him more than it ought to have done.

In the evening, after dinner, he sent to know whether I was most disposed for conversation or a nap; it was a fair, courteous challenge, which I not only felt bound to accept, but willingly embraced, in the hope of picking up information as well as of facilitating the progress of my journey. In the latter object I was disappointed, for the night at least; for after ten o'clock was past, and I again pressed him on the subject, it came out that nothing had been done towards procuring horses. I began the conversation by requesting that an order might be left at the gates, which are always closed at

sun-down, to permit me to pass. "By my eyes—by your head!" said he, "it shall be done; there will be no difficulty about that; but what is the use of the order until the horses are procured?"—"But, Khan, I was in hopes of hearing from you that they are ready." "So they shall be, *inshallah!* but I have been forced to send a man for four of them to a village a little way off, as none are to be had here." —"But surely, Khan, two beasts may be found in Câsveen; and these, with one of the chupperkhaneh horses, will serve my turn. I am quite ready to give any price."—"Be content," said he, with one of his gracious smiles; "you shall not only have two, but four, if I should pay the hire myself; ay, if I should sell this shawl for it. What! are you not my guest? But I would represent, that though you may have a crore of tomauns, your money is useless if the article you want does not exist. *La-illah-il-ullah!* you Franks think money will do everything; now, the truth of the matter is, that Meerza Nubbee Khan swept the bazar yesterday of everything that had four legs, giving any hire, two, three, four tomauns a head" (a big bounce, by the way)—"the Shahzadeh goes in a few days, and now every son of a burned father has hid his beast, so that the devil himself could not find them. But have patience; your delays have all been from the hand of Providence—no fault of yours, and you are not answerable for them, so do not be down-hearted. Before noon to-morrow you shall have the beasts—I, Shereef Khan, promise it, even if Mahomed Saleh Beg should go without."

Now here was a pretty blow to one who had confidently hoped to be half way to Tehran before the hour of which he spoke!—Do not you feel for me? Even when acknowledging my obligation for the Khan's kindness, I could not help permitting my disappointment also to appear. But I found that matters were in such a state here, that nothing was to be done but to make what use I could of the friendship he professed to feel for the English party, for whom he knew I had despatches, while on our own part we took what means were in our power to help ourselves.

Matters were truly in a singularly unsettled state at Câsveen; they were so throughout Persia; and though I wish to avoid as much as possible boring you with politics, I must, in order to be understood in what I may have to say regarding the condition of the country, request your attention for a little to a few of the leading facts regarding it, with which I have become acquainted since entering its precincts.

Everything that I have seen or heard convinces me, that in spite of the long period of comparative peace and tranquillity which the country has enjoyed during the reign of Futeh Allee Shah, its condition is in many respects greatly deteriorated since the time of my last visit. Many causes no doubt have contributed to this result, but the chief of these is assuredly to be found in the vicious system pursued by that monarch of quartering individuals of his family, sons, sons-in-law, and grand-children, as governors upon the provinces and districts of the empire. Had this system even been confined to the

principal provinces, it must necessarily have been attended with very pernicious effects upon the resources of the country, by creating a number of provincial courts so much more expensive than the usual governments, where each prince would naturally desire to vie with his brothers in point of brilliancy and power, and in maintaining a retinue of officers of state and show, viziers, meerzas, moostofees, confidential gholaums, and troops, all of whom must in some way or other be paid. But when this most expensive mode of providing for the royal progeny comes to be adopted on a still greater scale, and every chief town and district, nay, every petty *ballook* and considerable village, comes to be assigned to one or other of these royal scions, some idea may be entertained of the exhausting effect of such a system upon the revenues of the nation. Nor is this all—each of these princes, taking example by his father or grandfather, must have a huge harem filled with women of all sorts—a perfect hot-house of profligacy, and a nursery for innumerable growing evils in the shape of *more young Shazadehs*.

To estimate the expense of such harems would be scarcely possible, and still less so to calculate the extent of mischief they propagate. Not only are the established revenues of the country wasted to support these extravagant establishments, so that scarcely a tomaun reaches the royal treasury, but the peasantry are racked to the uttermost to supply the extortion of their rulers, and the still more exorbitant cravings of their unprincipled servants; and

thus are the resources of the country fruitlessly exhausted, its agriculture destroyed, its commerce embarrassed and obstructed, the roads infested with robbers, security to person and property annihilated, and, above all, the morals of its people, by being subjected to a system of violence which generates a proneness to falsehood and deceit, become almost irrecoverably corrupted—all to feed the sensuality and vice of a race of royal drones, the most profligate and depraved, and the most noxious to their country, that perhaps any land and age have ever produced.

The most obvious consequence of this state of things is a thorough and universal detestation of all the Kajar race. This was strongly enough expressed when I last passed through the country, but now it appears to be a prevalent feeling in every heart and the theme of every tongue, excepting those of the immediate dependants of the royal family. The apathy with which the Shah himself seems to regard the distresses of his subjects and the disorders of the country does not mend matters. He sees the evil which his system has produced, but has not energy to attempt a reform. Sunk in years, and fond of his ease and pleasures, for many age, past he had devolved all the cares of government upon his son and heir, the late Prince Royal Abbas Meerza, contenting himself with occasionally fulminating a mandate for payment of arrears against a refractory son, or threatening a rebellious chief: and although the system of administration adopted by Abbas Meerza, embarrassed as it was by the necessity of partial conformity to the arrangements

of his father's ministers, and of conciliating or managing his jealous and evil-disposed brothers, could scarcely be so uniform and sustained as to exercise an ameliorating effect upon the country, there was reason to hope, and even to believe, that upon his accession to the throne, had it pleased the Almighty to spare him, he would have listened to good counsels, and entered heartily into measures for increasing the happiness of his people and the prosperity of his kingdom.

But these fair hopes were cut off by the prince's untimely death, which in every point of view was a disastrous event for Persia. The ascendency which he had acquired, not less by the remarkable improvement of his character in point of judgment and resolution, than by the success of his campaigns in Khorasan, had already produced a powerful effect on those of his brothers who might have entertained intentions of disturbing his rights to the throne, but who of late seemed prepared to acquiesce in what appeared to be as much the will of Heaven as of the Shah. His death has of necessity revived the hopes of all these pretenders and rivals; for though the haughty Kajar Princes might have brought themselves to succumb to the well-maintained authority of the high-born brother, these same royal uncles would certainly feel but little disposed to bow the head and stand as inferiors in the presence of a nephew, even though supported by the declared will of a superannuated grandsire.

Thus, in the opinion of most men, it is scarcely probable that Mahomed Meerza, the son of the late

Prince Royal, although heir presumptive to the throne, will be able to make good his claims in event of the Shah's death, without the intervention of foreign aid. And what foreign power, do they say, can afford efficient assistance—that is, the assistance of physical force, but Russia? whose troops are ready on the banks of the Arras, and who sits watching her opportunity to advance. The Envoy of England is there indeed, say they, but what can England, remote and unable to send a soldier to the spot, effect either against rebellious princes or against a power that can, if required, throw ten thousand regular troops upon the scene of action? Fallacious as much of this reasoning is, it has had its effect; and almost every Persian has, from the time of the Prince Royal's death, looked forward to confusion and bloodshed, and a succession of civil wars; or to the intervention of a power which he hates, and would deprecate the friendship of, more than the first alternative. The whole country, from one end to the other, is a smouldering mass of discontent, and confusion, and alarm, which requires but a vent to make it break forth into flames and bloodshed.

Such is the spirit we have remarked and the tone that has been held since the first moment we crossed the frontier into Persia; and curious enough it was to see the effect of the two prevailing sentiments, hatred of the ruling family and detestation of the Russians, working together in the breasts of the people. Both these sentiments have now become national feelings; but near the borders, where the power of Russian intrigue is directed in full

force to blind the eyes of the peasantry, and where the Persian government, with a singularly perverse blindness, appears to be more than ordinarily active in oppressing its subjects, the existing evil is that which seems the greatest, and they would probably exchange the capricious tyranny under which they now groan for any other sway, even at the price of becoming Russian serfs; when, as they believe, they would at least know the extent of exaction and oppression they were to be subject to, and enjoy the remnant of their property with protection of their person. Accordingly, frequent migrations of the Nomade population take place from the Persian territories into those of Russia; while many of the fixed inhabitants rather long for the hour which shall bestow upon them the fancied protection of Russian sway.

A specious parade of liberality on the part of Russia to her late acquisitions, on the left bank of the Arras, has aided the delusion I am describing; for such, no doubt, is this hope of prosperity and happiness under the rule of Russia. They are said to have granted to all their subjects in that quarter an immunity from taxes for a term of several years, a measure which must have had a powerful effect on the minds of men who had long groaned under the burthen of irregular taxation. Thus, when I asked the Khan at Agajeek, whether the people in that quarter dreaded the advance of the Russians, or would prefer them to the Kajars, he replied, without hesitation, that the Kajars were the worst tyrants in the world; and that every one in that

district would prefer the Russians, except some of the chiefs, who themselves fleeced and oppressed the people. At Khoee and Tabreez the same language was held by the lower orders; while the nobles and *employées* of government declared it quite a mistake to imagine that any feeling of a favourable nature towards Russia existed in any of the border provinces. Such, they admitted, might at one time have been the case, but people, they averred, had since then had too close an insight into the brutal character of the Russians to entertain any sentiment for them but that of horror. All ranks and classes, however, agreed in this, that the prospects of the kingdom were most gloomy, and the supineness of the Shah in matters of government most extraordinary and lamentable.

This feverish and uneasy state of feeling appeared to affect the public mind more powerfully as we approached the capital, and much was said at Siahdehn of the dangerous and disturbed state of the country in consequence. Those restless tribes and adventurers, who court the stormy periods of change in Eastern empires, were already abroad; the roads said to be unsafe for travellers, particularly in small parties and on foot; and we were told that close to the gates of the capital there was no security after sunset. Every one is looking out for the death of the Shah, whose health, we learn, has long been precarious, and a general scramble is almost daily expected. Even a few days before we reached Câsveen, in consequence of a strong report of the King's death having prevailed, the chiefs of the Eeliaut

tribes, living within the walls, rose with their people and shut the gates, with the intention, no doubt, of a regular pillage, or something of the kind. The shops were shut, the people took to hiding their property, and all was in the greatest confusion: when the arrival of a chupper from Tehran, with tidings that the King was not only alive, but that he had gone out to hunt, a day's journey from the capital, dissipated the hopes of the turbulent, and restored order in the city. The Shahzadeh governor, who would, probably, have lost his life had the rumour been well founded, turned the tables upon the delinquents, and sent them a civil request to raise for him a large sum by way of smart money. It is asserted that nearly six thousand tomauns* were levied from them, but this is, probably, exaggerated.

The opinions which I gathered from Shereef Khan confirmed all I had previously heard, and it was not a little singular to hear an *employée* of government holding the language he did. After some such general conversation, in which he spoke with the utmost openness of the state of parties throughout the country, and the general feeling of the people regarding the royal family, he adverted to the complete and lamentable revolution occasioned in the prospects of the empire by the death of the Prince Royal, and prognosticated dire confusion at the death of the present Shah. The accounts he gave of the several aspirants to the throne were very much in accordance with what I had gathered on the way; indeed, I could myself, almost as well as he, have

* A tomaun is ten shillings.

indicated the quarters from whence the storm was likely to rage with greatest violence; and I was less surprised than concerned to hear him declare that Tehran would, in his opinion, be by far the most dangerous place of abode in case of a revolution, as being the great dwelling place of power, the focus of intrigue and political machinations, where men of every opinion and party in the empire are met together. There violence and outrage would naturally commence, and involve in their consequences all that might be residing there. "And," added he, "in these days you English had need to look to yourselves, for you will not then find Tehran like your father's house."—"Why, Khan," said I, "who is there at Tehran likely to harm us? which of all the various parties you speak of would find it their interest to molest the English?"—"What!" replied he, "think you, then, that the English have no enemies? Do you imagine that if they have evinced a tendency to forward the claims of any one prince in particular, that the adherents of all the rest will forget it in the day of tumult? Remember Greboyadoff—think of the fate of the Russian mission, and put no trust in the Tehranees."—"Ay, Khan," replied I, "I remember it well; but the Russians, as you know, had made themselves hated; now the English have, on the whole, been always rather popular."—"All true," said he, "but when the mob is up, and men's hearts are burning, and their blood is hot, are they likely to make distinctions, to remember kindly feelings, or follow any impulse but that of passion? No; the *Lootees* of Tehran will know neither English nor Russian, and

those who may think it their interest to remove either the one or the other, will never miss so fair an opportunity. Mark my words, there will be no safety in Tehran. I have often told the Elchee so; and I have told him, 'Come to Câsveen; here we are all of one party and one mind; here there will be no squabbles. We have four or five great men here, but they all pull together. There are three or four thousand Eeliauts within the walls, it is true, but their dwellings are so mixed up with those of the citizens that we have them under control. So, if the King should die to-morrow, we should just shut our gates and keep quiet till we know our right master.'" — "What!" said I, "you obey no one, I suppose, but your own Shahzadeh."—"*Our* Shahzadeh! *Our* Shahzadeh!" repeated he, with infinite contempt. "Dust on his head, for a Shahzadeh, indeed! If he chooses to stay quietly with us, *Bismillah!* let him do so—no one will molest him. If he wants to try his luck for the throne, *Mashallah!* let him speed forth—the way is open; but we care nothing for his good or evil fortune; we are Fakeers, men of peace, who fight with no one; Ryots, who take no part but with the acknowledged sovereign, and whenever such a one presents himself, to him we pay our duty. Let Mahomed Meerza come with his Nizam—let Hussun Allee appear with his Kermanees—let Mahomed Hoossein bring his Eeliauts from Kermanshah, our answer to them all is the same. Prove your title to our allegiance, and you shall have it — the lord of Tehran is Lord of Câsveen.

"This was the way we did when Aga Mahomed Khan, the uncle of this King, was killed at Sheesha, and Saduk Khan Sheghaghee appeared before our gates, and demanded entrance. 'By no manner of means,' said we; 'we admit no one here; what know we of you or your title? Go to Tehran; possess yourself of the capital, and then the gates of Câsveen shall open to their King.' Well, Aga, he stayed a month, and his horsemen ate up all our grapes, and plundered our villages; and then came Futeh Allee Shah, who beat and took him prisoner; and to Futeh Allee Shah we opened our gates, and tendered our allegiance; and just so should we do now if the succession is disputed. In the meantime I tell you again, Câsveen is the safest place in Persia in case of a row, and the Elchee should just leave Tehran, and come and live with us."

"Ay! Khan, may your favour never diminish!" said I; "but how can the Elchee leave his post? He must stay where his duty lies, and that is at the *Paee tucht!*" (foot of the throne—the court.) "*Paee tucht!*" repeated he; "a fine Paee tucht, with a corse to fill it! what will be his duty then? Bah! Câsveen is near enough at hand for all he has to do, and here he may live as safely as in his own house in London, were all Iraun disturbed—and such a country too! where will he find such another? Such water, such air, such fruit, and such bread! ay, and such green mountains and fresh *yeilâks* for the summer! By all means let him come to Câsveen."

In this manner did my friend run on, throwing out

every now and then some bitterly sarcastic sketches of his superiors of the blood royal, and many a sharp hit at the whole of that august family. The only one to whom he conceded any degree of merit or estimation was Mahomed Meerza, eldest son of the late Prince Royal; yet long would it be, he said, ere that young man would be fit to fill his father's place. I was happy to hear so many concurring testimonies in favour of this young prince. All agreed not only that he was the best of his race, but that he was a really worthy person, free of most if not of all the besetting defects and profligate habits of his countrymen. Of his talents the reports were less decided; but there was no reason, it was said, to apprehend any absolute deficiency of good sense or judgment.

The characters of his brothers were far more unpromising. Of Jehangeer Meerza, who had been left by his father in charge of the Azerbijan government, under care of an old confidential noble, called the Ameer Nizam, I have already told you something. He had not only been guilty of the most barefaced malversation and extortion in revenual matters, but had systematically set himself to seduce the soldiery from their allegiance, and even to raise other troops with the intent to supplant his brother in Azerbijan, and in hopes that, on the death of the King, he might possess himself of this important province: such at least was the interpretation put upon his conduct by those who described it to me. But, if such were his projects, he sadly mistook the means of effecting them; for instead of endeavouring

to render himself generally popular, he contrived, by a capricious cruelty and oppressive extortion, to alienate the minds of every class of the inhabitants except the soldiery, who profit by the fruits of his rapacity. One anecdote of this description I have already given you; and it may serve as a specimen of his talents for government, and the prospects of happiness for his subjects.

His brother, Khoosroo Meerza, resembles him, it is said, in his worst points, without having the redeeming ones of personal courage and military genius, which are attributed to Jehangeer. The characters of both have been given with tolerable accuracy by their own mother. On a certain occasion, when the Prince Royal himself was indisposed, and this lady was in attendance upon her august consort, an English medical gentleman, who came to see the prince, on entering the apartment found the royal pair in high debate regarding Khoosroo Meerza, and his lady-mother in the act of giving vent to some severe expressions against her son. The doctor attempted to soothe her, and plead for the absent culprit: but his good intentions were in vain, his excuses rejected; and at length she shut his mouth by exclaiming, "Ahee! friend, what have you to do in the matter? let it alone. God knows there is not a greater liar in the world than Khoosroo—except his brother Jehangeer." The point of the sarcasm is far keener in Persian than in its English translation—and, as you may suppose, silenced the good-natured doctor.

It does not appear that Câsveen is better ap-

pointed in a governor than other cities and provinces. Allee Nuckee Meerza, the *Rokun-u-doulut*, or "pillar of the state," as he is entitled, is, by all accounts, as haughty, selfish, presumptuous, and tyrannical as any of his royal brethren, and has done as much to ruin and embroil the country under his authority; a task in which he has been assisted by his precious brother-in-law, Meerza Nubbee Khan, whom the shah, *Mashallah!* has invested with the command of the Eeliaut or Nomade tribes of the district, and the *munsub* or rank of a commander of twelve thousand horse. He is, in fact, a sort of *eelkhanee*, or lord of the Eeliauts; and that number of men, for all of whom he receives pay from the revenues of the district, ought to be produceable upon demand from the villages and camps of these tribes. But so shamefully does he abuse this trust, by diverting the whole of the money to his own coffers, that the district is all up in arms against him and the government; and it appears probable that the royal command, which has just summoned him along with some fifteen or twenty *serkerdahs*, or officers of the Nomade tribes, to Tehran, has more to do with this clamour than even with the pomps and festivities of the *No-roze*, which have been made the pretext for the order which he has just obeyed.

7th March.—The strength of the Khan's friendship, or of his power, was this morning displayed in the result of his exertions in my favour; which amounted to just this. *One* of the two chupperkhaneh horses was placed at my orders, and three

others were provided to take me all the way to Tehran, for which I was to pay a hire of four tomauns. Now, however high, according to the country rates, this price might be, it would have been nothing except for the concomitant delay; and, after all, it appeared that the Khan was assuming credit to himself for an arrangement which neither he nor his people had anything to do with, the horses having been discovered, and the bargain made by my own attendant. This, after the solemn assurance that horses should be procured for me free of cost, even if they should come from the Khan's own stables, furnishes you with a fair measure of the value of most Persian promises. To do the Khan justice he did his best to smother the job in a multitude of words, and to exalt his own exertions. "Ah!" said he, "you may think lightly of my efforts to expedite you: but little do you know how many fellows I have beaten, how many I have sent to prison, how many I have flattered and besought, how many promises I have made, and lies I have told, to get at these beasts; and all for you—all for the sake of my friends; and, here are you, just going to set off like a gentleman, while the *Naib-ul-Sultunut's* Gholaum-peish-khidmut remains, and will remain, without a horse at all!"

With another flourish about his "friend Macniel," to whom he forthwith indited an epistle for me to carry, and after a thousand petty delays, and a thousand fears on my part for more, I received the "*Khoda Hafiz*" of the Khan, accompanied with a parting charge, to be sure and communicate to the

Elchee all he had been saying to me. I mounted, and rode forth from Câsveen, which ancient city, I dare say, you will be as well pleased to leave as I was. In passing through the place I was prepared to see great masses of ruins, the effect of the earthquakes with which this paradise of the Khan's is visited with more frequency than is agreeable. Perhaps it was this expectation that occasioned my being rather agreeably disappointed, for it did not appear to me more ruinous than most other Persian towns. I was struck, however, with the number of great excavations that appeared in several parts of the city, and not less so with the multitude of houses actually built in these. No doubt part of the matter excavated had gone to form the walls and buildings, but these could not account for the enormous chasms, nor explain how the rain and snow that fall into these deep holes, escape without submerging the houses.

About ten o'clock of the forenoon we left the gates of Câsveen, and proceeded seven fursucks, or twenty-eight miles, across the plain to Kishlâk. The Khan had foretold that we should find the road next to impassable, from mud, and should not be able to reach Tehran in less than four days. In this respect, as in others, we found the honest man had "eaten a good dose of dirt himself;" for excepting near the town, where irrigation was going on, and here and there where a torrent from the hills had overflowed and made great puddles, the road was very good. The air was sweet, and we soon were greeted by the first soft shower of the

season, which I enjoyed as a pledge that spring had truly broken the bonds of winter, and that "there should be no more snow!" though probably, plenty of "weary wandering feet."

At Kishlâk we intended only to remain four hours, to rest and feed the horses; but we lost another hour by Gregoor's neglect; after which, refreshed by a good pillaw, we fared forth again at ten in the evening, resolving to march on till daybreak, and then make such another halt. The night-air was pleasant, but our progress was retarded by the drowsiness of both Gregoor and the guide, who slept continually on their horses, and which sometimes infected myself, so that by daybreak, on the 8th of March, we had only made out six fursucks, or about twenty-four miles, and the load-horses were so completely done up, that it took us three hours more to Suleemanieh, a village some thirty miles from Tehran. Here with a good deal of difficulty we hired another horse, and by eleven o'clock forenoon started, as I fervently hoped, for the last time, trusting, too, to reach the gates of the city before the sun should set, at which time they are closed for the night.

Turning a salient angle of the mountain near Suleemanieh, we began to get a view, across the plain of Tehran, into the sort of recess in which that city lies; and you may imagine with what eagerness I scanned every ridge, and peak, and knot that came in sight, to recognise, if I could, some familiar object; but except the low ridge of Kinara-gird, in crossing which by night, twelve

years and more ago, I was nearly frozen to death, there was nothing that I could recollect — for the mighty Demavund had retired behind his veil of clouds—until advancing further the well-known mountain of Shemroon came in view, with its lofty forehead still white with unmelted snow.

There is no city of Persia, perhaps, that makes so poor an appearance as Tehran, when approached from the side of Câsveen. There is not a dome or minaret of any size to mark it; nor is it, like many others, surrounded with wood and gardens. All that meets the traveller's eye is a line of mud walls and bastions, surrounded with many ruins, in the middle of a great gravelly plain, which is bounded with high rugged mountains; and even these walls are not visible till he has reached within a few miles of them. For the last two fursucks, I pushed our miserable jades to a pace which I did not think was in them; and it would be vain in me to attempt to express the thrill of joy, the fervent emotion of thankfulness, the hug of security with which I saw myself pass the clumsy gates of the city, and felt that my labours of mind and body were over for a season. You know that indefinable sense of eagerness and apprehension which rushes on us as we approach a home from whence we have long been absent—it was with feelings something like that, that I pressed forward through the muddy streets to the entrance of the English palace, where, a strange and weary figure, with my Tatar boots and shulwars, splashed and ragged fur coat, a beard of six weeks' growth, and a face

as black as a coal from the tanning effects of wind and snow, I alighted from my jaded horse. But what were toils and sufferings now?—they seemed lost in the greetings of friends, and the sense of restoration to civilized society. My reception from Sir John Campbell was kind and hospitable as possible; and I need not describe to you the delight which I felt at meeting once more with my friend Macneil. The evening passed after a fashion I had long been a stranger to; and for the first time for nearly two months, I retired at night to the comforts of a clean bed, and laid my head upon an unanxious pillow.—Alhumdulillah!

Thus, thanks be to Almighty God, has terminated prosperously the first part of my purposed journey, and with it a Tatar trip of two thousand six hundred miles, which for fatigue and anxiety, and sufferings from cold and exposure, I will venture to match against anything of the sort that has been done. Of the first seven hundred and fifty miles from Semlin to Constantinople, I have spoken already. The first seven hundred miles, from Constantinople to Amasia, were performed within six days, in bitter weather, and in spite of mud, and rain, and snow; but for the last seven weeks, that is, embracing our march from Boli to Câsveen, it may be said we never saw the colour of the earth. During the whole of this period, we have been wading night and day through interminable wastes of deep snow, exposed to all the violence of storm, and drift, and wind, with the thermometer frequently from 15° to 20° under zero. Our clothes,

and face, and beards, were clotted into stiff masses of ice; our boots, hard as iron, frozen to the stirrup, and our limbs tortured with pain, or chilled into insensibility by intense cold. We were mounted on wretched carrion, which it was our daily and hourly task to whip and beat to the end of their stage, to dig out of the snow-wreaths into which they had sunk, or drag with their loads from the bottom of ravines down which they had rolled. Far from having the means of shifting when comfort or cleanliness required it, we continued riding for weeks without a change, though wet through once a day at least by the melting ice that hung upon our clothes, or the snow that fell on them; and rest, when we halted from necessity, was banished, not oftener by the swarms of vermin and the foul air which infested our squalid quarters, than by the cold, which, in spite of our furs, would strike from our thawing clothes or the frozen floor to our very marrow.

But worse even than corporeal sufferings was the anxiety of mind inseparable from the responsibility that rested on me, and the moral effort required not only to judge what should be done under circumstances of great embarrassment, but to force myself, day after day, and night after night, and oblige others also to face the physical suffering and consequences which that decision might involve. To know that the lives of many men and animals, as well as your own, rest upon your judgment and discretion, is a consideration that may well make a man pause before he acts; and

the impulses of mere humanity and self-preservation must be greatly heightened in these operations, by the recollection, that with you must perish all you may have done, and must terminate your efforts to do more—for to little end have been all your exertions, if, by one false step on your part, the fruits of them are to lie buried with yourself under a wreath of snow.

In essaying to describe all this to you, I know that I am attempting an impossibility, and may have only succeeded in fatiguing without amusing or instructing you; for how can you form a notion of situations which have never suggested themselves to your imagination—as the Persians say, "even in a dream?" and perhaps, after all, you may best come to estimate our sufferings from the declaration which I make in all good faith and sincerity, so far as I can answer for myself, that I know no consideration upon earth, short of absolute and imperative duty, which would induce me to undertake such another journey at such a season — *season* I repeat emphatically, because to season alone we owe all our hardships. The same trip might be made in autumn and early winter, or even in summer, in spite of the heat, without serious inconvenience, and if time were taken for moderate rest, with comfort and pleasure.

You may suppose that all this has not been gone through without some loss of corporeal substance, but you would scarcely believe the amount of reduction it has perpetrated upon my tabernacle of clay: little indeed remains of the moderately "stout

gentleman" whom I represented when we parted. I should serve now better for a study of the human skeleton to a student of anatomy. But in health, thank Heaven! I never was better; I am strong in mind and body, and up to any exploit; and so dear —— with humble and hearty thanks to the Almighty for preservation in so many dangers, I close this long epistle: my next will probably give you some account of our doings at Tehran.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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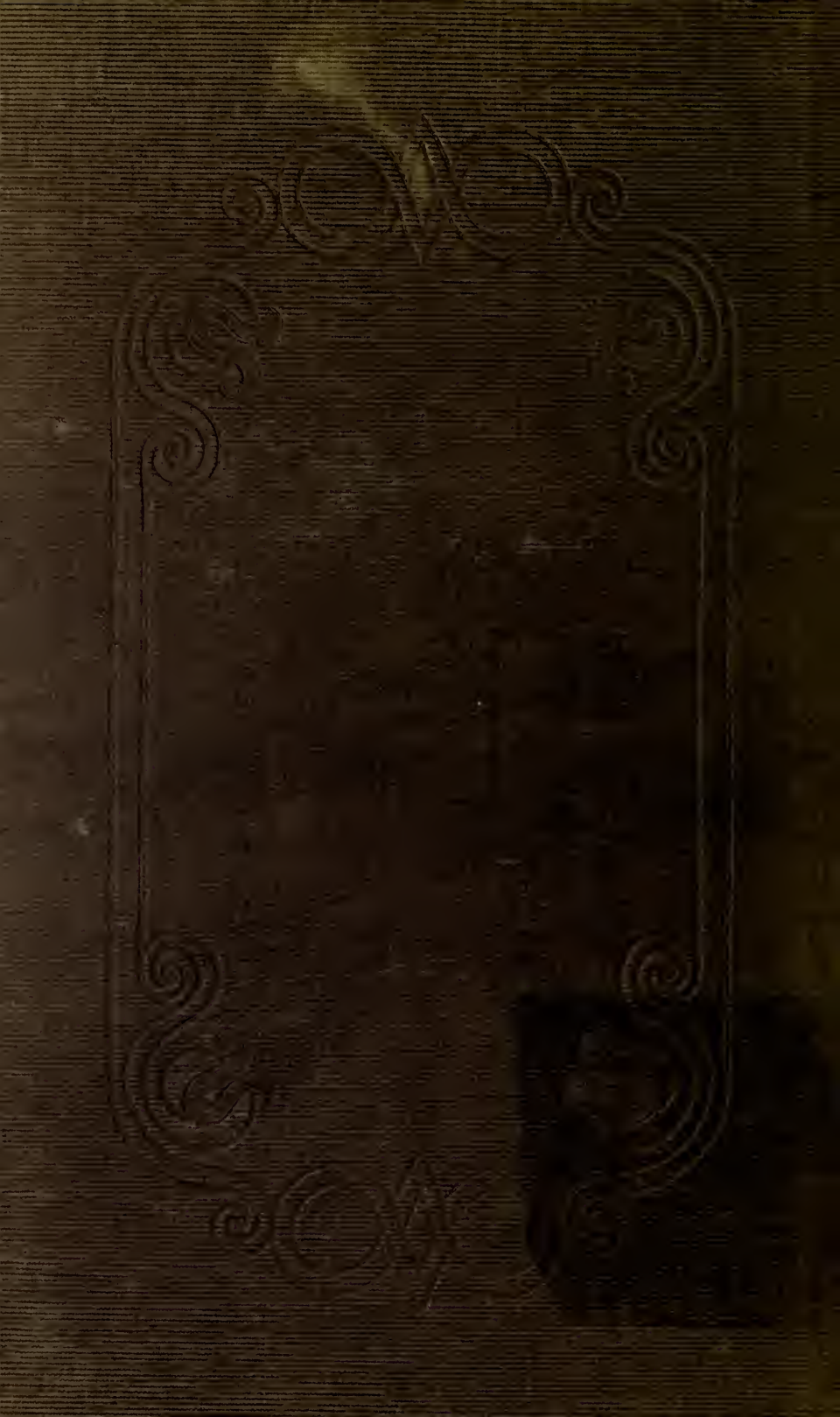
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